A NEW WAVE OF “HIGH-SKILLED” MIGRATION FROM TÜRKİYE: CALL CENTRE WORKERS IN ATHENS

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ABSTRACT

A NEW WAVE OF "HIGH-SKILLED" MIGRATION FROM TÜRKİYE: CALL CENTRE WORKERS IN ATHENS

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This study examines a novel migratory trend in which university-educated young people from Türkiye migrate to Greece to work in global call centres in Athens. Existing research on migration from Türkiye has primarily adopted two perspectives: the *brain drain* approach, which focuses on the loss of skilled talent, and the *new wave* perspective, which highlights migrants' higher education levels, secular orientation, socioeconomic status, and urban backgrounds. While extensive literature explores highly skilled migration from Türkiye, it predominantly focuses on top-tier professionals—such as software engineers, finance specialists, medical doctors, academics, and students—who migrate to preferred Western destinations, particularly Germany. Addressing this gap, this study sheds light on an overlooked component of Türkiye's recent migration trends: young, educated individuals who employ a distinct migratory strategy, involving temporary work in call centres in cities like Athens, Greece, from which they can access Europe. The study explores how call centre employment in Greece functions as a migration strategy for Türkiye's educated youth and the strategies they employ when confronted with immobility at various stages of their migration process. To answer these questions,

five months of ethnographic fieldwork were conducted in Athens between October 2021 and February 2022, including in-depth interviews with 31 migrants. Findings reveal strong parallels between new European youth mobilities and Türkiye's *new wave* migration. However, while both trends are largely motivated by non-economic factors, structural barriers impose distinct forms of immobility on Türkiye's new wave migrants, shaping their migration trajectories at multiple stages.

Keywords: highly skilled migration, new wave migration, migration of educated youth, call centre industry

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DEN YÜKSEK NİTELİKLİ GÖÇÜN "YENİ DALGASI":
ATİNA'DAKİ ÇAĞRI MERKEZİ ÇALIŞANLARI

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Bu çalışma, Türkiye'den üniversite eğitimi almış gençlerin Atina'daki küresel çağrı merkezlerinde çalışmak üzere Yunanistan'a göç ettiği yeni bir göç eğilimini incelemektedir. Türkiye'den göç üzerine yapılan mevcut araştırmalar temel olarak iki bakış açısını benimsemiştir: vasıflı yeteneklerin kaybına odaklanan beyin göçü yaklaşımı ve göçmenlerin yüksek eğitim seviyelerini, seküler yönelimlerini, sosyoekonomik statülerini ve kentsel geçmişlerini vurgulayan yeni dalga perspektifi. Türkiye'den yüksek vasıflı göçü inceleyen geniş bir literatür olsa da, bu literatür ağırlıklı olarak başta Almanya olmak üzere tercih edilen Batı ülkelerine göç eden yazılım mühendisleri, finans uzmanları, tıp doktorları, akademisyenler ve öğrenciler gibi üst düzey profesyonellere odaklanmaktadır. Bu boşluğu ele alan bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin son dönemdeki göç eğilimlerinin göz ardı edilen bir bileşenine ışık tutmaktadır: Yunanistan'ın Atina kenti gibi şehirlerde Avrupa'ya erişebilecekleri çağrı merkezlerinde geçici çalışmayı içeren farklı bir göç stratejisi kullanan genç, eğitimli bireyler. Çalışma, Yunanistan'daki çağrı merkezi istihdamının Türkiye'nin eğitimli gençleri için bir göç stratejisi olarak nasıl işlediğini ve göç süreçlerinin çeşitli aşamalarında hareketsizlikle karşılaştıklarında kullandıkları stratejileri

araştırmaktadır. Bu soruları yanıtlamak için, Ekim 2021 ile Şubat 2022 tarihleri arasında Atina'da beş ay süren etnografik saha çalışması yapılmış ve 31 göçmenle derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, yeni Avrupa gençlik hareketlilikleri ile Türkiye'nin yeni dalga göçü arasında güçlü paralellikler olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bununla birlikte, her iki eğilim de büyük ölçüde ekonomik olmayan faktörler tarafından motive edilirken, yapısal engeller Türkiye'nin yeni dalga göçmenlerine farklı hareketsizlik (immobility) biçimleri dayatmakta ve göç yörüngelerini birçok aşamada şekillendirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: yüksek vasıflı göç, yeni dalga göç, eğitimli gençlerin göçü, çağrı merkezi endüstrisi

To all the free spirits of the world

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
GAV	Göç Araştırmaları Vakfı (Migration Research Foundation)
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MPF	The Migration Partnership Facility
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

76 per cent of young people want to live abroad, one out of every two young people is not happy [1]

The headline, which circulated online on various media outlets in September 2020, referred to what was described as the most comprehensive "youth survey" conducted by a private consulting firm. This was followed by the statement "According to a survey conducted among 18-29 age group, 76 per cent of young people want to live abroad for a better future. While one out of every two young people say that they are not happy, 77 per cent believe that favouritism is more effective than talent" ("Gençlerin yüzde 76'sı", 2020).

A further research report from 2020, entitled "Youth Insecurity in Türkiye", which was conducted by an Istanbul-based think tank, corroborates these aforementioned findings, indicating that young people are willing to leave the country (Telek et al., 2020). Main findings of this study, which was conducted with young people aged 18-30, suggest that that young people in Türkiye have a desire for employment that is characterised by regular working hours, a regular salary, and regular holidays and this desire is observed to be independent of factors such as education and employment status. Other striking findings of the research are as follows; "relationships at work are hierarchical", "relatives and acquaintances are important in finding a job, not merit", young people are struggling with livelihood issues, their primary security is their families", "young people are worried and stressed".

[1] Gençlerin yüzde 76'sı yurt dışında yaşamak istiyor, her iki gençten biri mutlu değil. (2020, September 1). *Independent Türkçe*. https://www.indyturk.com/node/237081/haber/gen%C3%A7lerin-y%C3%BCzde-76s%C4%B1-yurt-d%C4%B1%C5%9F%C4%B1nda-ya%C5%9Famak-istiyor-her-iki-gen%C3%A7ten-biri-mutlu-de%C4%9Fil

Lüküslü (2024) conducted an analysis of recent surveys on youth in Türkiye, which demonstrated a high desire among young people to live in another country with the purpose of examining what these surveys reveal about young people in Türkiye. In accordance with the data observed, this desire is deemed valid for young people from all political segments, including those who voted for the ruling party, and is most prevalent among voters of the major opposition party in Türkiye. The survey results included in this report also show a growing tendency in the percentage of young people who would like to live abroad over the course of three years 2020, 2021 and 2023. In addition to that, there is a noticeable consistency in the surveys analysed which is about the certain destinations to live abroad young people pointing at. Europe, with a particular emphasis on Germany, emerges as the primary destination of choice, followed by the United States and Canada. The main reasons behind this desire were reported as related with better living conditions, freedom, feeling of security and developed human rights.

As demonstrated by the aforementioned illustrations, a significant number of surveys conducted over the past five years on young people in Türkiye have exposed a profound desire among this demographic to emigrate. This is also reflected in the reality of the increasing numbers of young people who are migrating. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute's migration statistics the number of people emigrating from Türkiye increased by 62.3% in 2022 compared to the previous year, with the greater share of youth and young adults. The official publication demonstrates that the largest age group among those who emigrated from Türkiye was the 25-29 age group, which accounted for 15.8% of the total, followed by the 30-34 age group at 13.4% (TÜİK, 2023). The latest available data sets indicate that the number of Turkish citizens emigrating from the country in 2022 has reached an unprecedented high since 2016, with the figure standing at 139,531. However, extant research and the public discourse in Türkiye about the rising trend of youth migration have remained predominantly focused on the phenomenon of brain drain (Elveren, 2018). This focus has largely been confined to the outflow of highly qualified individuals engaged in scientific, technological and engineering disciplines with the perspective of the loss for the country of origin. For instance, a bulletin issued by the *Göç Araştırmaları Vakfı* (Migration Research Foundation) disseminates an article on the

subject, bearing the title “Brain Drain in Türkiye Raises Alarm” (GAV, 2024) and provides the Higher Education Brain Drain Statistics for the years 2021-2023, as published by Turkish Statistical Institute. Accordingly, brain drain rate of university graduates (i.e. citizens of the Republic of Türkiye who completed their undergraduate education in Türkiye) emigrating from Türkiye in 2023 was 2%, representing an increase from the 1.6% recorded in 2015. The highest rate of brain drain, as measured by field of education, was observed in the domain of information and communication technologies (6.8%), with engineering, manufacturing and construction (4.4%) and natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (2.6%) following closely behind. When measured by the undergraduate programmes, the highest brain drain rates were among the graduates of molecular biology and genetics (17.9%), bioengineering (10.2%), business engineering (9.8%), electronics engineering (9.1%), mathematics engineering (8.9%) and computer engineering (8.4%). Within the top five countries of destination for those who completed a degree programme, the USA ranked first with 21.4%. Germany (17.5%), the United Kingdom (11.2%), the Netherlands (6.9%) and Canada (4.9%) also featured among the top five most popular countries (TÜİK, 2024).

These most recent actors in Türkiye's migration history whose international mobility can be classified as ‘brain drain’ are increasingly being referred to as ‘new wave’ migrants in various publications, distinguished by their higher levels of education and differentiation not only from previously established migrant communities in destination countries but also from the broader population in Türkiye, particularly regarding their lifestyles, secular orientation, socioeconomic status, and urban backgrounds (Türkmen, 2019). They include academicians along with the ones who dismissed from their academic positions in Türkiye, intellectuals, artists, graduate students, and white-collar professionals. The majority of academic literature concerning the so-called new wave of migrants and the increasing trend of exodus from Türkiye focuses on certain preferred destination countries, with particular interest placed on Germany (Ağca-Varoğlu, 2020; Çömlekçi & Bozkanat, 2019; Okumuş, 2020; Oldac & Fancourt, 2021; Ozcurumez & Aker, 2016).

Notwithstanding the documented increase in the motivation among youth from diverse social backgrounds to migrate, there is a paucity of research on those who

have actualised this aspiration by relocating to unconventional destinations, i.e. outside the traditional career pathways of top-tier professionals such as software engineers, finance specialists, or medical doctors migrating to favourable destinations in the West. Considering this research gap, this research aims to shed light on the unseen and neglected components of the recent migration steam that Türkiye has been experiencing, a group of young and educated individuals who use a different migration strategy to Europe in which temporary stay to work (call centre employment) in the periphery (Athens, Greece) turns into an entrance to wider Europe.

It was October 2021, when I first visited two men from Türkiye in their early 30's in their shared apartment in Athens, and the first thing I recognize is an old-style furnished dining room was turned into an office. Two desktop computers with the headsets hanging up to the screen monitor were covering the large dining table. These devices were actually provided by the company they were working for as they started working at home due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Their tasks were basically about answering the calls, responding to e-mails and chat requests, scrolling the screen to review various contents in their native language Turkish, for 8 hours a day 5 days a week. But when they finish their shifts and leave their desk, they can enjoy being in a European city: going out for a walk-through green parks and historical sites, dining at local taverns where spirits are chapter than Türkiye, or having drink after work with their co-workers from different parts of the world. Athens is an ideal spot at the south-eastern corner of Europe, pretty close to Türkiye geographically yet under the cover of Schengen – European Union (EU). And much more important than all, the company gives these Turkish citizens a precious yet relatively easy chance to have access to this part of the world: working in their native language for the global call centre network.

Since 2013, there have been new migrants leaving Türkiye and migrating or otherwise escaping to the neighbouring capital of Athens in various ways (Üret, 2021), although the fact that Balkan countries are at the bottom of the list of countries young people expressed desire to live (Lüküslü, 2024, p. 4). A considerable part of these migrants is educated youth fleeing Türkiye who arrive in Greece by way

of special employment contracts to work in multilingual call centres. These young migrants from Türkiye in Greece are generally new graduates who lack both savings and work experience, which prevents them from applying to more highly skilled positions in the more popular destination countries. However, they have English language skills and university degrees and are looking for alternative lifestyles, experiences, futures, and career paths. By focusing on this special group of young and educated immigrants from Türkiye who migrated to Athens to work in an international and multilingual call centre, this research aims to explore different strategies and pathways of migrating Europe adopted by the highly educated members of Türkiye's younger generation who seek future for themselves abroad. Moreover, it is imperative to incorporate structural factors and historical processes into the analysis. The present study thus endeavours to elucidate the manner in which domestic conditions engendering a profound desire to migrate interact with international mobility regimes that impede Turkish citizens' global movements, and the distinctive context of reception, to shape the experiences and realities of immigrants in Athens.

The present thesis is concerned with at this particular juncture. Firstly, it analyses the migration of educated youth from Türkiye who are pursuing alternative destinations and employment paths within the wider group of 'new wave migrants'. Therefore, the first concern includes explaining the characteristics and backgrounds of this new migrant group, their migration motivations, their perspective towards the life in Türkiye as well as experiences of being a migrant and a call centre worker in Greece. This first focus deals with a dynamic process of being migrant, since the migration plans start before the act of migration and continue to evolve ongoingly in the process at multiple places regarding multiple places. Therefore, it requires a transnational lens as well as a multi-sited perspective to overcome the fixity of the space and time.

Secondly, it addresses the 'regimes of mobility' a concept suggested by Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013) which highlights the unequal globe-spanning power relations in defining the limits and meanings of mobility and immobility. The present study adopts an 'immobility perspective', predicated on the recognition that

migration, everyday mobility, and border-crossings are subject to numerous socio-spatial constraints, regulations and limits operating at multiple scales (Bélanger & Silvey, 2020). The aim of this research is to examine the impacts of these complex interactions between mobility and immobility on the migration trajectories of Turkish youth, and to explore their experiences and imaginaries at multiple stages. How do they negotiate and (re)shape their migration projects when facing immobility in several contexts spanning time and space? And how do regimes of mobility interact with neoliberal global capital that produces the precarious and bounded immigrant labour in the transnational call centre employment?

And lastly, this thesis is interested with the unique context of reception. It aims to examine how globalisation of labour and work allow Greece to become a hub for nearshoring activities of transnational call centre companies providing services to global markets and how this process impact on regional migration movements by offering an alternative route for ready to migrate educated youth in Türkiye, Greece that they have not think about as destination country before. I the past decade, Greece has been considered by the migration scholars either as a sending country of its highly educated youth to the global North and especially to Europe with the EU's free movement called as "the third ('new') emigration wave" of Greece (Kousis et al., 2022) triggered by the severe impacts of the 2008 global crisis on Greece, and as a receiving country for increased number of irregular migrants including asylum seekers and refugees from Asia and Africa at the EU's border. In contrast with that, Greece received little attention as a receiving country hosting migrants of young and educated professionals from various parts of the world through a formal employment contract. Migration of highly educated individuals from Türkiye to Greece is totally a newly emerged phenomenon which is highly correlated with the labour demand of growing transnational call centres in the country that has not been widely studied yet. Moreover, in addition to being a novel and unpopular destination for educated migrants from Türkiye, the history[2] of the two neighbouring countries renders this migration movement a particularly unique phenomenon.

[2] Zürcher, E. J. (2003). Greek and Turkish refugees and deportees 1912-1924. Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt.

Hereupon this dissertation aims to answer these two central questions: How does the opportunity to work in a call centre in Greece is used as a migration strategy to Europe by the educated youth of Türkiye? What strategies do they adopt when faced with conditions of immobility at different levels in their migration process?

In order to achieve this objective, a five-month ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in Athens, Greece, between October 2021 and February 2022. The entry and stay in the field were facilitated by the framework of an Erasmus exchange doctoral studentship at Panteion University, Department of Social Anthropology. The main source of data was collected through in-depth interviews with 31 migrants from Türkiye who have been working and living in Athens at the time of the interviews. In-depth interviews were supported by one focus group and one key informant interview as well as constant engagement and participant observations with the call centre workers in their social settings.

1.1. Chapter Overview

This thesis is composed of six chapters. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical overview of the international migration and the way in which highly skilled migration have been emerged and become an indispensable part of the migration studies considering the ongoing transformation of work and global capitalism. By reviewing the existing relevant literature, the chapter discusses the central themes and concepts build around the issue of highly skilled migration as well as their emergence and evolution in different time frames and contexts. Following featuring the main concepts and definitions, the chapter moves on to the discuss the topic considering the aspects of geographies and policies. The second part of the chapter under discussion herein analyses the phenomenon of highly skilled migration within the context of new European youth mobilities. A notable aspect of this analysis pertains to the mounting evidence of non-economic factors, and the significant contribution made by Greece and other countries on the periphery of the continent to this evolving phenomenon. Lastly, the chapter focuses on the Turkish experience of highly skilled migration and discusses the shifting focus reflecting the changing and diverging scales, destinations and migrant profiles.

Chapter 3 presents the research context and the field site where the ethnographic fieldwork was undertaken in this study. The chapter commences with an examination of the political economy of the global call centre. This is undertaken by tracing its global expansion and division of labour within the post-industrial service sector, which occurs in a globally uneven process. Then, it continues by locating the case of Athens, Greece as an emerging nearshoring destination along with the other examples in the Balkan region and tries to explain the restructuring and transformations undergoing in the region that creates new mobility possibilities. Following the portray of the research site, where various migration flows have been observed in the context of the ongoing effects of the economic crisis and restructuring,

Following Chapter 3, Chapter 4 outlines the methodology of this thesis, which guides the research design, including a detailed account of how the fieldwork was conducted. Qualitative research methods are employed in this study to collect and analyse the data by adopting a flexible research strategy that involves the use of range of research techniques and tools in the research namely in-depth interviews with oral history focus, participant observations, key informant interview and a focus group. Moreover, the entry and access issues of the researcher when studying a mobile group in the country of migration and the role of gatekeepers and sampling methods were thoroughly discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 aims to provide an overview of the participants and to highlight certain patterns that define and differentiate this group of migrants with new characteristics in new destinations. The chapter starts with the presentation of certain socio-demographical aspects including their age, gender, education, last city of residence in Türkiye, marital status and residence period in Greece. This empirical chapter discusses the importance of certain life-course events on migration decision including the experiences in abroad and perceived employment conditions in Türkiye. Moreover, this section elucidates the manner in which the prevailing discourse of escape pertaining to participants' own migratory movements has been influenced by the ongoing conflict situation and the multiple crises that have been endemic in Türkiye over the last decade.

Chapter 6, as being the other empirical chapter of this thesis investigates the influence of legal frameworks and migration policies on shaping the migration imaginaries and realities of individuals, with a particular focus on the role played by citizenship status and the origin country in this regard. It first demonstrates how does the feeling of immobility resulting from the restrictive visa regimes and migration policies together with the desired social connotations of migrating contribute to the emergence of migration aspirations and generation of alternative destinations. The chapter then examines how particular migration policies and regulations establish a distinctive migratory pathway for Turkish citizens, consequently resulting in conditions of immobility and bounded labour that migrants encounter. Finally, Chapter 6 sets forth a discussion of the three common patterns of strategies employed by the subjects under consideration to navigate the multiple mobility-related challenges.

Chapter 7 is devoted to the conclusion, in which the primary findings of the research are revised and discussed in relation to extant studies in the field. It primarily discusses the areas that have been illuminated by this research and the new insights it has yielded. In addition, the constraints inherent in the study and the directions in which future research could be pursued are outlined in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to clarify the theoretical framework and conceptualisations which have been utilised throughout this thesis. In order to do so, central themes, concepts and their operational definitions as well as the emergence, evolution and instrumentalization of them in various periods and contexts will be presented by reviewing the existing literature.

Studying international migration requires adopting a global perspective as it is completely linked with other global issues. This is why migration matters. An historical overview of international migration reflects that it is highly correlated with momentous events, changes, and problems such as wars, economic expansions, political transformations, conflicts and crises (Koser, 2007, p. 4). With a view towards being able to trace and understand contemporary migration streams, we need to examine major global transformations.

Since 1970s, the world has witnessed a change in work. The most noticeable feature of this new order is a shift from economy based on manufactural production to a service work especially in the developed world. In the occupational structure of this new economic context, the white-collar positions in the service sector outnumber the blue-collar ones in the industries predominantly based on knowledge, science and technology (Watson, 2012). To identify this change in work and organisation of society in general, sociologists apply several terminologies like “post-industrial society”, “information society”, “post-Fordism”, or “the new capitalism” (Bell, 1974; Castells, 2005; Harvey, 1990; Sennett, 1997).

The current big change, an ongoing transformation of our present social condition, accompanying the discussion above on change in work organisation is the process of

globalisation (Watsons, 2012). Simply, the term refers to a movement, a set of processes towards a greater interconnectivity and interdependency of people all around the world (Steger, 2003). Under the conditions of globalisation, we see a rapid connection of societies in a variety of ways, as Giddens (2009) elaborates "from long-range economic exchanges and international political agreements to global tourism, electronic communications technology and more fluid migration patterns" (p.110).

It is the combination of the political, social, cultural and economic factors that creates contemporary globalisation. The rise in the information and communication technologies is one important aspect of globalisation as it accelerates and intensifies the movement of any transactions like information, knowledge and ideas around the world. Thanks to the developments in these technologies, people are more connected with each other, and they can be aware more easily about the life and occurrences in different parts of the world. The changes that have taken place in information and communication technologies have also resonated in the economic ground. The foundation of the global economy is no longer limited industrial or agrarian production. Instead, it is becoming more and more dominated by products based on information targeting consumers on a global scale like computer software programmes, media and entertainment services and so on. Now, these networks operated by information and communication technologies enable the global economy that runs crossing national borders. In this type of economy, workers can be hired and fired on a global scale, and it requires "flexibility of employment, mobility of labour and constant re-skilling of the workforce" as it creates new jobs and occupations (Castells, 2005, p. 9).

This process is necessarily accompanied by the movement of the large manufacturing facilities to the other parts of the world where labour is cheaper and less regulated. In this new international division of labour, transnational corporations play an essential role in the development and proliferation of the global commodity chains in which a product is a result of worldwide labour and production processes. Transnational corporations produce and market their goods and services spanning national borders. Certain types of the work, mostly the manufacturing requiring low-

skilled work are relocated to the newly industrialised low-wage economies through outsourcing or offshoring. Yet the more prestigious and profitable parts of the production process such as design, finance, marketing, management stay in the Western developed countries. More recently, according to Castles et al. (2014) white-collar back-office jobs have also started to relocate to the emerging hi-tech areas in the low-wage periphery countries, like India.

Given the prevailing conditions of change and transformation, along with technological advancements in the work on a global scale, there is a discernible need for diversified forms of labour equipped with new skill sets across various sectors worldwide. In addition to this, economic, demographic and democratic disparities between different parts of the world have been growing. The growing inequality between the Global North and the Global South sustains labour shortages on the one hand and surplus on the other hand. This imbalance makes a higher number of people likely to be internationally mobile. Although the manufacture and mass production have been exported from Western developed countries to the low-wage economies, there remains a substantial demand for diverse forms of migrant labour across various occupations within predominantly service-based economies, ranging from highly skilled positions to casual and temporary employment in agriculture and care work. As a reaction to this demand and to enhance their competitive advantage within this global economic order, governments in the developed countries strategically formulate various policies to recruit and manage labour migrants (Castles et al., 2014). Meanwhile, individuals who are inclined to migrate constitute another significant group of actors in this picture, as they develop particular strategies to market their skills based on both their human, cultural and social capitals in an international labour market.

A thorough examination of the literature reveals the process of the ways migration studies incorporate highly skilled migrants once an invisible and overlooked group as a distinct and prevailing category in the contemporary migration streams. This analysis further provides insights to grasp the current states of migrant workers under the ongoing transformation of work and global capitalism.

2.1. Highly Skilled Migration

Reports and publications of international organizations on development, labour and migration such as United Nations (UN), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO) etc. can be a good starting point to trace the issue of highly skilled migration, since they reflect the hot debates on the global agenda and provide useful resources. For instance, OECD's Working Paper published in 1997 stands out as it attempts to gather the concepts and definitions in a way that provides a typology that accommodates the wide spectrum of highly skilled migrants. In the paper, Salt (1997) draws attention to the importance of migration by the highly skilled and critically discusses its late recognition in the academic arena. Similarly, another meeting report by International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in 2005 addresses the growing interest towards the topic of highly skilled migration and number of studies conducted by international organizations such as OECD and ILO. One common point of these papers in addition to the fact that demonstrating the relevance and prominence of the subject in the given time period, is that the shared view on the blurriness of the concept highly skilled migrant which has no solid definition that accepted universally. This confusion eventually brings with it problems concerning the relevant data and empirical knowledge about the issue.

Salt (Koser & Salt, 1997; Salt, 1997) explains other reasons behind the lack of early scholarly attention to the migration of highly skilled within the general migration studies based on two main grounds. Firstly, because of the temporary and short-term nature of their movement in general, these people had not been considered as migrants for long time and their movements were excluded from the migration analysis. Moreover, movements within the free mobility systems, for example in Europe, lead them to escape from statistical measurements. Secondly, considering their class, culture, race and small number, highly skilled migrants were not perceived as a problem for the receiving countries that needs detailed research for integration purposes. These two main reasons make this group of migrants 'invisible' until the realization of the heterogeneity of migration and even diverse and evolving

patterns of experiences within the group of highly skilled migrants which calls for new conceptualisations to explain the issue with its complexities.

In the last 20 years, studies on international migration have started to include highly skilled migration as a category and show its growing prominence in the global migration movements. In the paper published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the global trends in migration movements, Castles (2000) provides a categorization of international migrants including the "highly skilled and business migrants" among the other type of current migration patterns. In 2001, *International Migration*, an academic journal on behalf of IOM, published a special issue on highly skilled migration. In this special issue, Iredale (2001), underlines the rapidly changing numbers and trends in highly skilled migration by reminding the long existence of the phenomenon, and shows its considerable weight in the current internation migration movements. Following the same argument, according to Docquier and Rapoport (2012), migration by the highly skilled "is becoming a dominant pattern of international migration and a major aspect of globalization" when taking magnitude, intensity and determinants into consideration (p. 724). They assess the number of international migrants in the years between 1960 and 2005 and realize an apparent increase in the rate of migration to developed and high-income countries -as it tripled-, in contrast to the steady migration rates in general with a slight increase. Moreover, authors pointed out that the great share of these migrants is increasingly composed of skilled individuals (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012, p. 682).

Notwithstanding the evident complexities of the phenomenon as it was briefly explained above and will be discussed throughout the thesis, as well as multiple actors involved in the process which make a common definition difficult, in the literature many use the criteria of tertiary education in their analysis for highly skilled i.e. university degree (Iredale, 2001; Vertovec, 2002).

2.1.1. **Concepts and Definitions**

Traditionally, two concepts have been employed in the migration of highly skilled people which are brain exchange and brain waste. Brain exchange includes the

renowned concept brain drain and brain gain. Assuming that all highly skilled migrants are assigned to jobs compatible with their educational profile; these terms refer to the loss of valuable skilled individuals in one side and their contribution to the economic and scientific development of the other side. Brain waste on the other hand underlines the cases when highly skilled migrants are subject to deskilling as they do not use their skills and expertise in their new jobs in the destination (Salt, 1997).

Historically, the concept "brain drain" was employed in the highly skilled migration studies from the economic and development perspective which date back to 1960s (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). The term was first used regarding the context of migration of scientists and academics from UK to the US in the early 1960s (Elveren, 2018, p. 11). Following the same concern, in 1960s and 1970s the publications focused on the excessive loss of (drain) highly qualified individuals i.e. engineers, doctors, scientists from developing countries to the developed ones and its welfare and economic consequences for both origin and destination countries. In addition to the overall concerns for the developing countries in cases of losing their trained human capital; some more balanced arguments towards the 1990s and onwards include the possible contributions of the brain drain -therefore can be regarded as gain- into the home country through the remittances, knowledge transfer and increase in education levels in addition to its apparent benefits to the country of origin also to the world economy and knowledge productivity in general (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012, p. 683). Docquier and Rapoport's analysis concludes that although brain drain may increase the already existing global inequalities between developing and the developed world, each sending country is not affected in the same way as there are winners and losers mostly depending on the characteristic of countries' policies (2012, p. 725). It is important to remind that these studies on the impact of brain drain mostly focus on the cases where the skilled migrants could properly perform their own professions like one of the well-known examples African medical doctors, European scientists and Indian IT workers.

In 1990s, another aspect of the brain drain has come into circulation in the literature as several empirical evidence especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and

Socialist states in the Eastern Europe document the cases where skilled migrants experience de-skilling in the labour markets of the destination countries (Koser & Salt, 1997; Salt, 1997). This phenomenon echoed in the literature as "brain waste" which questions the underutilization of migrants' skills (Breinbauer, 2007; Reitz, 2001). In their detailed work on highly skilled migration policies Triadafilopoulos and Smith (2013) also counter the generally held view that assumes highly skilled migrants are always wanted and welcome by bringing up the issues of secure work, underemployment, unemployment as forms of brain waste.

One line of research considers the brain waste as a result of the low international transferability of skills across borders including non-recognition of degrees and diplomas acquired abroad and focus on the economic impacts of unused skills of migrants (Chiswick & Miller, 2011; Pires, 2015; Reitz, 2001). Other line of research shows the importance of cultural capital in Bourdieuian sense, instead of focusing on human capital solely in recruitment processes which results in brain waste (Bauder, 2003; Nohl et al., 2014). Kofman's (2012) study on the other hand, reveals the gendered aspect of brain waste by showing the higher levels of deskilling and underemployment among migrant women comparing to men in Europe. Moreover, the author notes the other factors such as the migration route (migration as labour migrant, student, spouse or refugee), or country of origin that may affect migrant women in different ways.

The historical review shows that recent studies on highly skilled migration have more balanced and inclusive perspective when comparing to the bipolarity of brain drain literature. Brain drain as a concept refers to one way movement and usually assumes a homogenous group. However, the recent literature also incorporates the complex and multi-dimensional aspects of the movement by the highly skilled, regards different actors and experiences. For instance, Bailey & Mulder (2017) demonstrate an alternative questioning beyond the migration and development paradigm that sees highly skilled migrants only as economic agents seeking economic maximization in return to their human capital investments. They propose to analyse highly skilled migrants also as social and political agents considering their life courses and institutional factors in their migration. Similarly, Kerr et al. (2017)

highlight the heterogeneity of highly skilled migration flows and increasing diversification of origin countries across the globe, as they call to consider "the multidirectional nature of high-skilled migration and the large variations in patterns across countries" (p. 216). They assert the importance of multiple actors involve in the global migration flows of highly skilled and therefore oppose the classic view of individual choice aiming better income and opportunities. Instead, they show the role played by the multinational firms and the agglomeration affect.

Reflecting this idea of heterogeneity and multiple flows, some scholars turn their attention to the other forms of highly skilled mobilities conceptualized as "brain circulation" and "brain exchange" and try to explore the potential outcomes other than brain drain. Brain circulation in this sense is regarded as a favourable form of mobility which refers to a constant state of in and out migration of highly qualified individuals with return migration from various geographies, hence enhance knowledge and production. Similarly, the term brain exchange is used for describing exchange of skills between countries when it is balanced and not unidirectional, occurs usually between developed countries (Breinbauer, 2007; Lowell & Findlay, 2001; Straubhaar, 2000).

Students are another contested issue regarding highly skilled migration, whether they constitute part of skill migration or not. Although by themselves, in the process of acquiring tertiary education in the host country, they may not be counted as highly skilled migrants yet, they are presumably becoming one. Taking this potentiality into account, many OECD countries use international students as a talent pool by applying two main mechanisms. The first one is permitting right to work for international students. In this way, international students gain familiarity in the labour market practices which would increase their possibility of landing a job after graduation and affect the decision to stay that country. Secondly, many countries have started to offer international students pathway to status change as highly skilled migrants after graduation (Chaloff & Lemaitre, 2009). Based on the above stated factors, migration of international students is considered as an important aspect of global skill mobility and find itself a place in the highly skilled academic and policy debates since they constitute a source of highly skilled.

2.1.2. Geographies

Geography is another important aspect to be considered when talking about the multidimensional and heterogeneous character of highly skilled migration flows. Notably, in the literature as well as in overall public and policy discourses, geographies of origins and destinations may alter the way this movement is perceived and conceptualized. Weinar & Klekowski von Koppenfels (2020, p. 2, 26) argue that there is a geographical distinction in the definition of highly skilled migrants based on the racial and ethnic biases. While the highly skilled from the Global South regarded as migrants with long-term settlement ideals, the term expatriate as well as other connotations are used for the ones from the Global North and their movement is generally referred as mobility, not migration. Here the Global South is used to refer to developing countries in general and the Global North is conceptualised as developed countries, OECD member states in specific. Likewise, Scott (2006) addresses the biased classifications in skilled migration that mirror the global hierarchy of developmental, ethno-religious, and racial disparities. For instance, as he argues, international migration between the developed world, such as the free-moving intra-European migrants, is not a cause for public concern and is regarded as unproblematic and skilled. By contrast, international migration from the developed world is largely considered to be unskilled and requires attention.

These presumptions imply certain expectations and labels, such as integration may be required from the highly skilled if they are from the South, but not the same for the ones from the North. However, in reality, expatriates may come from both North and South, highly skilled migration from the South can also be short-term and temporary, and finally all migrants can have integration challenges in the new country regardless of their skill level, length of stay, and the region of origin and destination (Weinar & Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020). Similar attitudes can be found in other seminal works on highly skilled migration. For example, Koser and Salt (1997) suggested the term movement rather than migration for the highly skilled flows by showing its changing complex geography all around the globe and the predominant short-term characteristics in contrast to the concept of brain drain.

However as just mentioned above, this avoidance of using the term migration and the migrant for the highly skilled and application of other alternatives like expats, global talents, mobile professionals would carry a risk of reproduction of the racialized migrant stereotype as something unwanted (Weinar & Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020; Yanaşmayan, 2019).

2.1.3. Policies

Growing numbers of highly skilled migrants from increasingly diverse geographies around the globe have turned scholars' attention to the policy responses of the states regarding these flows. It is essential to examine these works since they provide us insights about first, how the highly skilled migrants are regarded by the states and second, how their policy actions based on their expectations from the highly skilled migrants affect the migration flows and migrants' composition.

It is widely acknowledged and documented that for many governments, "immigration of highly skilled workers is not only desirable but essential to protect investment" as Salt (1997, p. 28) noted down. Therefore, we observe that governments are implementing policies to be become more attractive for the highly skilled and secure their place in the global competition for talent. Implementation of such policies to create appealing conditions for the highly skilled also encounter little or no public contestation. The reason is that in both political and public discourse, highly skilled migrants are seen unproblematic, high earners who would not become a burden on the welfare systems and can integrate easily due to their class statuses. Moreover, their labour and knowledge are considered beneficial to the economic development especially in specific sectors of the 'knowledge economy' like information technology (IT), considering the aging population and corresponding skill shortfalls in most developed countries (Triadafilopoulos & Smith, 2013).

The result is a global trend among the developed states where migration policies are designed in a way to restrict the entry of certain type of migrants including low skilled workers and asylum seekers, but at the same time aim the migration of highly skilled by offering favourable immigration rules and schemes for them (Czaika & de

Haas, 2017, p. 896). This liberal rationale that evaluates migrants based on their contribution to the host society according to Sánchez-Montijano et al. (2018, p. 3), "discriminate migrants in terms of skills, education, countries of origin and their contributions to the host countries". Therefore, in today's developed world migration policies are predominantly based on the notion of selection (Czaika & de Haas, 2017) where the opportunities are completely distinct between the highly skilled and the low skilled (Cerna & Czaika, 2016).

The most known example of these selective policies is the points system, that have been applied by Canada first and followed by Australia and New Zealand to attract highly skilled migrants (Shachar, 2013). The United States, traditionally the most attractive destination for the highly skilled, also have been adopt skill-based admission categories. Visas such as H-1B that promises transition to permanent status combined with the economic opportunities helped the Unites States to lead in this global race for the best and brightest for a long time. More recently, European countries have also participated this competition in line with the EU agenda of becoming "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world" (Shachar, 2013, p. 94) which brought about increased need for skilled personnel. Countries implemented various fast-track entry processed for the highly skilled, and in 2009 they introduce a common directive within the EU called Blue Card to make entry and residence conditions more attractive for the highly skilled migrants in EU member states (Cerna & Czaika, 2016).

When reviewing these policies, we can identify two main approaches in the management of highly skilled labour migration. In the classical immigration countries e.g. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US, highly skilled migration policies are mostly supply-driven. While the European system is largely driven by the demand (Weinar & Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020). In the supply-driven migration systems, host countries take applications directly by the immigrant candidates themselves regardless of any job offer. Then the assessment is based on certain criteria that the applicants have like age, language, education, and work experience. On the other hand, demand-driven regulations are based on employers' needs for specific skills which cannot be fulfilled locally. In this type of migration

systems, selection of highly skilled migrant is made by the employer initially. Work and residence permit applications to the migration authorities are also handled by the employer, following the specific job offer (Chaloff & Lemaitre, 2009). Both systems contain their own risks. For example, in the supply-driven systems immigrants may face unemployment or underemployment especially when their skills and expertise earned in country of origin are less valued by the employers.

In the demand-driven systems, employers may have trouble to find a foreign candidate for the position if the language of the country is not widely spoken outside of its borders and if a common international language like English is not spoken in the workplace. In reality, countries may use combined versions from each system, but greater tendency to the one of them in their policies can be observed (Chaloff & Lemaitre, 2009). Therefore, clear cut definitions of migration policies of each state and capturing policy trends is not easy. What we see are constant policy changes and modifications as countries learn from each other and start to converge (Weinar & Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020, p. 41). More importantly as the authors above address, whether it is demand-driven or supply-driven the needs of employers play a huge role in determining the definition of skill and talent in the. This is why we see changing and diverging migration policies between countries, although they are all seem to agree on more open policies towards the highly skilled.

As several countries especially the Western developed countries and also newly industrialized countries around the globe continue to develop migration policies targeting the highly skilled, this phenomenon attracts research and academic interest. These policies, their practices in real terms, their effectiveness, as well as their intendent and unintended implications on the local labour markets and migrants' lived experiences are analysed in various studies (Castles, 2006; Czaika & de Haas, 2017; Kiwan, 2010). For instance, Czaika and de Haas (2017) discuss the inconsistent and contradictory nature or immigrant policies towards different categories of migrants. Authors point out that immigration policies based on selection that favours highly skilled migrants and curtails the migration of the low skilled labour actually suggest a mismatch with the economic needs which

eventually results in the utilisation of irregular migrants who deprive certain rights in the informal labour market (Castles, 2006; Kiwan, 2010).

Research focusing on the effectiveness of receiving countries' talent attraction and retention policies uncover the migrants' agency and multidimensionality of the factors involved in decision making (The Migration Partnership Facility [MPF], 2024). These indicators affect the attractiveness of any country targeting the highly skilled migrants are found to be not solely based on economic factors, but also include factors related to integration and inclusion. Example practices vary from ease of procedures, fast tracks to permanent residency, citizenship, to tax rate, gender equality, wide usage of common international language, family reunification, and immigrant friendly social climate (MPF, 2024, p. 8).

Chaloff and Lemaitre's study (2009) on highly skilled migration policies in OECD countries also supports that some determining factors can play more important role than others in the attractiveness of the country. Their comparative analysis suggests that a country with a widely spoken language may be considered more preferable over a country that eased entry barriers to attract highly skilled with its own unique language (p. 42). After all, language is evidently key for social and occupational integration for migrants from every skills spectrum. Similarly, Sánchez-Montijano et al. (2018) point out that a common preference among migrants is to follow established routes where they have already existing social networks. Aside from the existing various policies designed and implemented to attract the highly skilled individuals in the global labour market, migrants' agency is decisive in the end for the selection of the destination. Personal experiences that are either expected or lived about the destination regarding the education, employment and social service opportunities strongly influence the decision of the highly skilled.

Research in this direction challenge the widely held view that confine the group of highly skilled migrants as income maximisers simply and show the "positive influence of non-economic drivers for highly skilled migrants such as distance between origin and destination, social networks, lifestyle, healthcare, as well as richer cultural and social climates" (Cebolla-Boado and Miyar-Busto, 2020, p. 183).

Likewise, study conducted by Cebolla-Boado and Miyar-Busto suggest that generous social welfare systems along with public expenditure and taxation does not necessarily produce deterring effect for the highly skilled migrants in choosing destinations, rather welfare setups and total wellbeing of society seem to work as encouraging elements.

2.2. The Immobility Aspect

Public discourses on the advantaged positions of highly skilled migrants in the global labour markets and the representation of developed countries as offering more and more attractive opportunities for the global talent to get the best of from that race creates a general assumption that mobility opportunities and labour market integration of the highly skilled are always a smooth process. However, as it was discussed previously in the geographies part, mobility of the individuals even the highly skilled ones are not exempt from global power relations (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Salazar, 2021). Access to more mobility opportunities such as returning or moving elsewhere usually depends on possibilities offered by one's passport (Weinar & Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020). Zhan and Zhou (2020) are among the researchers to have drawn attention to this issue, showing that highly skilled migrants constitute a heterogenous group and may face different forms of immobility, such as employment-related and/or settlement-related, depending on the socioeconomic status of the migrants, the immigration regime in the receiving context and the development of the sending country.

Shamir (2005) proposes the concept of 'mobility gap' to denote this inequitable capacity for mobility across populations in the contemporary era (p. 200). He observes that the process of globalization functions as a system that generates its own mechanisms of closure and containment, resulting in mobility becoming a tangible reality for a limited social stratum while remaining a rare phenomenon for many others. Contrary to the prevailing perspective that emphasises an escalation in diverse flows, researchers such as Shamir (2005), Salazar and Smart (2011) assert that the contemporary epoch of globalization is concomitant with an augmentation in constraints on mobility. In a similar vein, Turner (2007) posits that the advent of

securitization in contemporary societies has given rise to a pervasive phenomenon of surveillance and control, engendering profound forms of immobility for individuals under regulatory frameworks whilst allowing for the mobility of goods and services. Revealing the contradictory nature of modern states - on the one hand, the economic need for greater flexibility and fluidity in all forms of mobility, and on the other, the increasing restrictions on human mobility through the use of technological developments in biotechnology; he draws attention to the paradoxical immobility that globalisation has brought. Hollifield (2004) proposed the concept of the 'liberal paradox', which posits that states appear to be ensnared in the era of globalisation. The global integration of markets has given rise to heightened levels of free trade and investment, as well as international migration, a phenomenon that has been accompanied by a shift towards less liberal policy approaches.

It is therefore argued that the concept of human mobility is distinguished from other types of mobility by the complexities as well as the inequalities it entails, thus rendering immobility an area of inquiry that should be interrogated (Bélanger & Silvey, 2020). Rather than seeing mobility and immobility as two distinct, binary concepts, scholars urge to see the dynamic interplay between them as they are often intertwined in real life situations (Bélanger & Silvey, 2020; Salazar, 2021; Schewel, 2019). Schewel (2019) proposes the incorporation of immobility into the study of migration as a means of facilitating a more profound comprehension of the migratory process, given its inextricable nature. Immobility can be experienced by migrants on the move as periods of immobility are common part of human mobilities, and it can also be experienced by non-migrants who aspire to migrate but are unable to do so (Carling, 2002). Authors argue that immobility is a flexible and dynamic concept that shifts over the course of life, as it is always relative and never represents an absolute state (Salazar, 2021; Schewel, 2019).

It is of particular significance to note that, in a manner analogous to the concept of mobility, certain individuals are responsible for their state of immobility. The distribution of this control, which is characterised by its unevenness across global societies, serves as a defining factor of social power in the contemporary global era (Salazar & Smart, 2011). To this end, scholars give attention to the fact that

increasing immobility as well as exclusion and disconnection is the result of the very process that produces intense movements and global linkages. Some mobilities are encouraged and can be way safer and faster; whereas other types of mobilities can be unsolicited and may carry much more difficulties and risks. The conceptualisation of immobility as an inherent and indispensable component of all migratory movements illuminates the manner in which individuals are variably attached to specific locations through processes encompassing social, political and economic variables.

2.3. New European Migrations: Young and Highly Skilled from the Peripheries

One of the most visible groups that emerges in research on highly skilled migration is the new intra-European mobilities of young and educated migrants from the Eastern and Southern peripheries. King (2018) highlights the importance of three major events in understanding the new migration era in Europe identified by growing numbers and range of source countries in the European migration system. These include the removal of the Iron Curtain, European Union (EU) enlargements of 2000s, and the 2008 global financial crisis. These developments of the EU integration process on the one hand erased the structural barriers for the East-West migrations by allowing free movement of the populations in the Central and Eastern European countries and on the other hand prompted a general understanding especially among the European youth that values migration and mobility, for new experiences and broadening opportunities.

Trevena's (2013) research demonstrates the situation of educated migrants from Poland in the United Kingdom who are working in low-paying, low-skilled jobs, focusing on the reasons and impacts of this 'occupational skidding' on migrants' experiences as a result of their movement. The findings indicate that structural economic factors in the home country significantly influence the lived experiences of Polish graduates and their decision to migrate. These factors include the poor state of the labour market, which is characterised by widespread corruption and nepotism, a surge in higher education, high youth unemployment, and a lack of job opportunities. The study also reveals that the decision to migrate is often made on a spontaneous basis, driven by the idea that there is little to lose. The majority of graduate migrants

from Poland based in London are observed to be motivated by post-materialist goals, such as learning English, living in a global city, and enjoying life by spending money on travel and entertainment (Trevena, 2013, p. 180). Hence, the low-skilled jobs they can easily find, which require minimal responsibility and commitment, also allow them to be free to enjoy the life they pursued abroad. Furthermore, as the duration of their employment in the host country increases, they accumulate experience and enhance their English language proficiency, thereby reducing the mismatch between their job and their skill set.

Another study on the intra-European youth mobilities focuses on the migration from the Republic of Ireland, Italy and Romania – all three corners of the Europe's periphery- to the United Kingdom (Lulle et al., 2018). Especially for the highly skilled youth from these countries, career prospects, meritocracy and the lifestyle opportunities in the multicultural open society that they do not think they would have in their home countries were distinguished as key migration motivations. Temporariness, adventurousness, and openness to the future opportunities define the research participants' stances towards their mobility in which they also express the aspirations like personal growth, being independent and higher satisfaction with life. Finally, and the most importantly in my opinion, this research conducted by Lulle et al. (2018, p. 9) has revealed the further diversification in migrants' future mobility prospects which are pivotal in defining the European youth mobility landscape. It is not only a decision between here and there, i.e. staying in the United Kingdom or going back home to the Republic of Ireland, Italy or Romania in this case, but migrants also consider moving to another European countries as they use these movements strategically for maximising opportunities.

As previously stated, the repercussions of the global economic crisis of 2008 have been manifested in the migratory patterns throughout Europe, particularly in the Southern European countries that were most adversely affected by the crisis. A new migration corridor of European South-North involving highly skilled young people has been re-emerged in this era from the countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece that have predominantly been affected by the crisis. In this regard, the research conducted by Bartolini et al. (2017) on post-crisis migration in Southern

Europe presents insights into the driving factors behind the migration of young, highly educated individuals from these countries. The United Kingdom and Germany constituted the two primary destination countries for the sample, accounting for approximately 40% of the total number of individuals who participated in the electronic survey, which had a sample size of almost 6,500. The absence of visa restrictions within the European Union has been observed to facilitate this movement; a mere 20% of respondents have been found to reside outside the European Union. The findings highlight the significance of non-economic factors in explaining the current migration movements of well-educated Southern Europeans towards other EU countries. For the young and educated migrants, the decision to migrate has appeared to be driven by opportunities to improve their training, career prospects, employability, and overall quality of life. Through migration, they aim to reach their full potential and see a return on their educational investment in the destinations, unlike their home countries, which they view as constrained by nepotism, corruption, and clientelism.

Another article focuses high skill emigration from two EU member states specifically in the crisis ridden Southern Europe; Italy and Greece. In their article, Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2014) draw that new migration from these countries is predominantly an intra-European mobility aiming the larger economies within the Europe like the United Kingdom, Germany and France. Their analysis also supports the idea that migrants' agency is more important in the choice of destination, and the selection is based on the factors which may not directly related to the migration policies of the receiving countries but more about

> … an overall appreciation of the quality of life including respect for the citizen, security, and a good health and education system (…) the quality of democracy, social justice, the quality of higher education, or the openness and flexibility of the labour market… (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2014, p. 1630).

As the authors argue, this migration is driven more by a sense of relative deprivation than by absolute necessity. The crisis has further exacerbated pre-existing conditions such as corruption, nepotism, and the lack of meritocracy, leading to a perceived decline in opportunities. As a result, human capital is increasingly directed toward

migration, as individuals seek employment in destinations that offer better living conditions.

Labrianidis (2014) draws attention to the increasing tendency of professionals from Greece and other peripheral countries to migrate internationally. Based on an extensive survey of almost 2000 Greek professionals with a higher education degree who lives or have lived abroad, Labrianidis's study suggests strikingly comparable findings on the defining motivating factors explaining the samples' migration pattern. Financial gains, even exists, were not reported as determinant in migration decision rather "qualitative dimensions, such as working conditions, career prospects, the wider institutional framework and the sense of meritocracy are of greater importance" for the research participants (Labrianidis, 2014, p. 322). The four countries in which the participants are predominantly concentrated are the UK, the USA, Germany and Switzerland. It has been demonstrated that the prevailing visa regime is instrumental in facilitating specific migratory patterns. This particular study has revealed that a significant proportion of Greek professionals have opted to reside within more prosperous EU member states. Findings also reveal that it is not the countries, but the specific cities attract the Greek professionals where they can enjoy being in a global city such as London, Brussels, Paris or Geneva in Sassen's (2001) term. The significance of lifestyle, freedoms and recognition is pivotal in elucidating this migratory phenomenon which include live in a well-organised, open, and multicultural societies with more professional environment and better quality of life and services as well as liberation from the familial control and renegotiation of their sexuality.

Pratsinakis's (2022) work similarly demonstrates the 'new Greek emigration', a recent wave of outmigration of highly skilled young Greeks, and how the crisis intensified as well as changed the main compositions of this trend. The research was focused on Greek migrants living in two major European destinations namely the United Kingdom and the Netherland. Pratsinakis's insightful analysis concludes that the resurgence of outmigration in the period of crisis is beyond the brain drain as an outcome of solely economic considerations. Rather, the argument lies in the fact that, with the crisis, emigration has emerged as a widely considered and practised option

among the youth of Greece, many of whom feel profoundly disillusioned with the prevailing socio-economic conditions and perceived lack of prospects within their homeland. In this sense, migration is perceived as a means of personal fulfilment, autonomy, and the pursuit of a more fulfilling life.

Another study on the recent intra-European migration movements initiated from Greece was conducted by Groutsis et al. (2020). Their research on the phenomenon of 'new' migration from Southern European countries which severely affected by the global financial crisis of 2008 examines the case of skilled migrants from Greece working in Germany. This study has highlighted the pivotal role of deceasing social and human rights in the country of origin heightened by the crisis in shaping migration motives. Particularly for the highly skilled, migration to Germany for employment purposes represents a kind of emancipation, as on the one hand they are protesting against the existing deteriorated socio-political environment at home by leaving the context, and on the other hand they feel a sense of regained recognition and self-respect as their work is valued.

The review of the literature on intra-European migration systems provides sufficient and compelling evidence for the emergence of recent migration patterns from the peripheries and, more recently, from crisis-affected countries in Southern Europe. These new migrants are characterised by being young and highly skilled and that their migration is driven less by purely economic factors and more by aspirations for improved career opportunities and a higher quality of life in their destination countries (Arslan et al., 2014). Greece, in particular, stands out as one of the leading emigration countries within this migration system. It is therefore evident that contemporary dynamics and characteristics of migration and mobility within Europe can be illustrated by means of specific migration trends emanating from a variety of origins and directed towards the major destination countries.

2.4. Highly Skilled Migration in the Case of Türkiye

The topic of highly skilled migration from Türkiye has been analysed in various academic publications since the 1960s. However, this topic has constituted a very

small part of the migration literature in Türkiye due to the field's preoccupation with labour migration to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, especially to Germany under guest worker schemes. Türkiye was one of the main countries sending migrant workers to Europe during the economic boom. However, this is not the case for highly skilled migration, where Türkiye's share among the countries of origin of highly skilled migrants to Europe is quite small. Most of the skilled migrants from Türkiye reside in the United States and Canada (Elveren, 2018). An examination of the literature on highly skilled migration from Türkiye reveals that most academic studies, reflecting the scale of this migration, have primarily focused on North America, particularly the United States. However, more recent studies on highly skilled migration from Türkiye have increasingly focused on Europe, as the migrant profile has shifted over the past few decades from unskilled or semi-skilled labour migration to highly skilled migration.

2.4.1. Early Studies

Oğuzkan's (1971) book on Turkish doctoral graduates working abroad can be considered one of the first studies the field. Oğuzkan's (1971) study focuses on Turkish scientists and employees with a doctorate degree who had migrated from Türkiye and working full-time in a foreign country. This study, which aims to understand the social and economic factors and personal experiences that played role in the migration of the group in question, also aims to propose measures to reduce and regulate the high-level migration of skilled personnel from Türkiye. Descriptive statistics from a survey conducted with 150 individuals living abroad reveal that the majority of respondents (71.3%) were residing in the United States which was followed by Canada and West Germany. The author notes that the findings are aligned with the fact that the US is the primary country attracting highly educated personnel from all over the world. Descriptive statistics show that participants largely have an urban middle and upper-class characteristics. Half of the participants were born in three big cities in Türkiye; İstanbul (33.3%), Ankara (9.3%) and İzmir (7.3%). Also, the education level of their parents was well above the average in Türkiye. According to the study's findings, professional factors rank first by a significant margin among the factors influencing both the decision to migrate and the

decision to remain in the host country. Professional factors include the opportunity to find a job in the field of expertise, the abundance of financial resources and tools necessary for professional work, the opportunity for advancement in the profession, the opportunity to receive further training in the field of expertise, proximity to major science centres, the high value given to science and scientists, and the suitability of the scientific atmosphere. Among these categories, the most frequently mentioned factor was the "opportunity to receive further training in the field of expertise". The author notes here that professional satisfaction and the desire for success are important for highly trained migrant groups and that professional considerations are prioritized when making significant life decisions like migration. Oğuzkan (1971) also assessed the possible negative consequences of this migration movement, highlighting the growing need for doctoral-level personnel in Türkiye. He emphasized that the unreciprocated loss of educated individuals who could play a pioneering role in economic growth, higher education, and social and cultural life was significant and worthy of action from Türkiye's perspective.

Kurtuluş's (1999) research, which conceptualizes the topic as brain drain and examines student migration from Türkiye to the United States, is another prominent study in this field. The study focuses on the case of the US as a receiving country, based on the fact that it is the main destination for brain drain from Türkiye. In particular, the study investigates the return intentions of Turkish students in the US. Quantitative survey method was employed in the research with the sample of 90 respondents who studied in the US at the time of the study. Results show that only a small percentage of participants (4.5%) have inclination to settle after their graduation. However, considering irresolute group (12.2%) and the ones who incline to prolong their stay (26.7%) in the US for a short time for reasons such as specialization and gaining experience, the author offers policy solutions to encourage return migration of high skilled Turkish immigrants. Aligning with Oğuzkan's (1971) findings, this study also identifies professional satisfaction and the desire to succeed as important reasons for the migration of highly skilled human capital and emphasizes the need to provide advanced-level education institutions and attractive, competent work and research environments to prevent and minimize this loss.

Research and scientific studies aiming to understand skilled migration from Türkiye continued with a series of research by Güngör and Tansel (2003; 2007; 2008; 2014). These studies, in line with Kurtuluş's (1999) work, examine the return intentions of students living abroad and highly skilled migrants. In their research (Güngör & Tansel, 2007), authors used internet survey and reached 1224 responses who live and work abroad holding at least university diploma. Although no geographical restrictions were placed on the countries where the targeted group resided, the majority of participants (77%) were located in North America. This is because the researchers focused on universities and associations in North America and used a snowball sampling method in reaching potential informants. Similar with the Oğuzkan's (1971) findings, respondents have higher levels of socio-economic background with highly educated parents in general. The research findings, consistent with previous studies, indicate that the work environment, along with better career and educational opportunities, plays a significant role in the decision to migrate. By using the same data set, further publications by Güngör and Tansel (2008; 2014) focus on return intentions of professionals and students -as they see migration of students and their potential nonreturn behaviour comprise one of the major sources of brain drain from Türkiye- residing abroad. Their findings provide quantitative evidence that nonreturn intentions are not only derived from higher income levels in the host countries but also influenced by the non-material factors including familial concerns, political environment, lifestyle considerations, length of stay, and existence of research centres.

Köşer Akçapar's (2009) research, which examines skilled migration from Türkiye, also focuses on the United States as a receiving country as one of the most outstanding receiving country for Turkish professionals, scientists and students in graduate and postgraduate levels. The author emphasizes the significance of the receiving countries' policies that facilitate skilled migration arguing that such migration is a crucial component of the US policies to maintain its economic and political dominance in the global market. Köşer Akçapar (2009) adopts a holistic approach when analysing the phenomenon of highly skilled migration from Türkiye to the US that incorporates micro and macro variables. According to the findings of the study in which both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were

used, the flow of highly skilled individuals from Türkiye to the US do not pose a direct threat of brain drain which would negatively impact on the country's economic, social, cultural and scientific development. Rather, numbers and activities of highly skilled migrants from Türkiye in this research indicate conditions of brain circulation with the continuous ties between Türkiye and the US including various transnational practices like knowledge transfer and investments, sending remittances in social and economic forms, charity work, annual holidays, teaching their children Turkish language and Turkish culture. Nevertheless, Köşer Akçapar (2009) warns that if the fundamental determinants of skilled migration from Türkiye, such as differences in living, working, and research conditions, the inadequacy of technological resources, and the lack of professional employment opportunities, persist or worsen, many skilled migrants living in the US will be less willing to engage in brain circulation behaviours. The author further underscores the necessity of conducting comparative studies in this field to the other key destinations especially in Europe, such as Germany and the UK.

Recognizing this gap in the literature and the increase in migration trends in this direction, recent years have seen a growing focus on European cases in the literature on highly skilled migration from Türkiye. Ozcurumez and Aker (2016) conducted a comparative case study in Canada and Germany to identify the factors influencing the choice of a destination country, with a focus on North America and Europe, which have distinct migration histories and policies. The findings of the qualitative research show that social networks play an important role in the decision of destination country for skilled migrants in both Germany and Canada. The presence of family members and friends living in the destination country, personal experiences related to that country, and previous visits were found to increase the likelihood of preferring one country over another. The findings of the research support the argument that social networks reduce the economic, social, and psychological costs of moving to another country. Particularly for highly skilled migrants moving to Germany, the presence of a large Turkish migrant community was noted to play an encouraging role even for those who did not have their own social networks when making the decision to migrate. The study also highlights that whether the countries have liberal immigration and citizenship policies, which can be described as

immigrant-friendly, is an important criterion in choosing the country of destination. Participants in Canada frequently mentioned that Canada's clear immigration procedures and policies, such as granting citizenship rights within three years, were decisive. In their article, Ozcurumez and Aker (2016) made a valuable contribution to the literature by conducting a comparative study in terms of target country selection in highly skilled migration from Türkiye, addressing an important gap in the literature.

From the early 2000s onwards, the flow of highly skilled migration from Türkiye have expanded to include European destinations alongside North America, particularly the United States, as many European countries have entered the competition for talent by implementing attractive migration policies aimed at highly skilled individuals from outside Europe. Sunata (2011) examined the phenomenon of highly skilled labour migration through the example of those migrating from Türkiye to Germany to work in the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector. The study discussed the impact of Germany's "Green Card" system, introduced in 2000 to attract highly skilled labour from outside the EU. The author argues that highly educated labour migrants incorporate various forms of capital into the migration process as she examines the decisive role of family, nation-states, and the labour market. Additionally, migration of highly educated individuals from Türkiye to Germany is a striking case worth studying since it also reveals the ways in which this group encounters with the already established Turkish immigrant communities has formed through various migration waves into the country. Not only Germany but also many other Western European countries have hosted Turkish migrant workers, largely as a result of bilateral agreements between Türkiye and these nations, designed to meet the labour demands of their growing economies. Today, more than 4 million immigrants of Turkish origin live in Europe, with nearly 80% residing in Germany (Abadan-Unat, 2011).

2.4.2. "New Wave" Migration: Recent Trends

The involvement of these new highly skilled and educated migrants into the former conventional migration scenery of Turkish guestworker in Europe, has attracted

researchers' attention on the topic. One of the fundamental questions in recent research has been how these 'new' migrants define themselves, how they differentiate themselves from existing migrant communities, and how they are perceived by the host society. Yanaşmayan's (2016) qualitative study, conducted with 42 highly educated migrants from Türkiye living in Amsterdam, Barcelona, and London, investigates how these 'new' migrants differentiate themselves from previous migrant groups. The study's findings indicate that the new migrants actively seek to distinguish themselves from earlier migrant groups by emphasizing their human capital, education, and secularism. In doing so, they attempt to mitigate the potential stigmatization associated with their country of origin and religion, which are often positioned in the lower segments in the ethnic hierarchy in the host societies. Yanaşmayan (2016) also clearly acknowledges that this behaviour pattern exhibited by educated migrants from Türkiye in the host country settings contribute to the reproduction of the existing prejudices.

Research conducted by Cesur, Hanquinet, and Duru (2018) focuses on a similar topic about highly skilled Turkish migrants in Europe. Using qualitative data, the study examines the self-identification and the sense of Europeanness of highly skilled Turkish migrants residing in the United Kingdom, Romania, and Italy. Their analysis similarly show that highly skilled migrants tend to distinguish themselves from the typical Turkish image associated with being less educated and conservative, instead they position themselves as more modern and Western who carry European values in cultural as well as political regards like lifestyle, freedom of speech and expression, democracy, human rights and freedom.

As can be observed from the examples given above, the literature on highly skilled migration from Türkiye has been shifted from solely human capital and economic focus to include cultural and political considerations and identity construction of the new migrants in the host societies. The ways in which 'new' migrants differentiate themselves from 'old' migrants have become more prominent as the migration of highly skilled individuals from Türkiye to European countries that experienced labour migration in previous decades has increased. This phenomenon has been conceptualized as "new wave" migration in many academic and non-academic

publications. Türkmen (2019), on highly skilled migrants in Germany, draws attention to the dramatic changes in the socio-economic profile of migrants from Türkiye to Europe in recent years, noting that the new migrants have higher levels of education compared to previous migrant groups and come from urban backgrounds in large cities such as İstanbul, İzmir, and Ankara. Additionally, the study points out that this group differs significantly from both the Turkish population in Germany/Europe and the majority population in Türkiye in terms of educational background, religious beliefs/practices, and lifestyle. This study shows that these "new wave" Turkish migrants, who do not conform to the stereotypical image of Turkishness in the host society, are beginning to take root in Germany and Europe.

The term "new wave migration" also appears as a status/naming attributed by the highly skilled migrants themselves. For example, Çömlekçi and Bozkanat (2019) examine a Facebook group called "New Wave in Berlin" as a case study, where the group members consist of newly highly skilled migrants from Türkiye. Their study explores the motivations behind the use of social media by new generation migrants, and the findings suggest that users utilize this virtual group for pragmatic needs while also providing a platform for experience sharing among migrants facing similar problems, fostering a sense of community, and offering networking opportunities. The fact that this Facebook group/online platform which is exclusive to newly arrived young and educated migrants from Türkiye, is named "New Wave in Berlin" by its creators and members, demonstrates how the term "new wave" has been internalized by the migrants themselves as a privileged and differentiated category. Similarly, Ağca-Varoğlu's (2020) research draws attention to the strategies developed and employed by Turkish students pursuing doctoral studies in Germany to avert the negative stereotypes they encounter in their daily lives as Turkish immigrants. Qualitative evidence suggests that students distinguish their position by identifying with a sub-group comprised of highly skilled migrants to avoid being identified as second- or third-generation immigrants due to the negative stereotypes attributed on them. Those tactics employed by the highly skilled "new wave" migrants to emphasize their distinctiveness and privileged status include preferring to speak English rather than German to underscore their identity as international students, engaging in intellectual discussions to display their socio-cultural capital, highlighting their urban origins, particularly İstanbul as a global city, and

deliberately avoiding immigrant spaces in Germany. This study is a significant contribution that demonstrates the importance of non-material factors, such as discrimination, alongside material factors in decisions regarding return migration and onward migration.

In their research on the migration of Turkish graduates from German universities who moved to Germany as international students, Oldac and Fancourt (2021) also draw attention to the self-designated term of 'New Wave Turks' which was adopted by this well-educated, relatively recent group of migrants in Germany to differentiate themselves from the existing diaspora and to create their own community identity. As posited by Oldac and Fancourt (2021), the recent constituents of the total diaspora in Germany exhibit divergent motivations for relocation, along with variances in their levels of education, demographics, and political orientations when juxtaposed with the preexisting and well-established Turkish diaspora. The authors also show that although the existence of diaspora community was practically helpful for the newcomers initially, the prevailing perspective among the local Germans that stigmatises the existing diaspora as inferior engenders prejudice against new immigrants and creates challenges for them. Consequently, they endeavour to build their own community as a new wave and to segregate themselves from the diaspora. Another important aspect that Oldac and Fancourt (2021) touch upon about the differences between these two immigrant groups in Germany is that while the existing diaspora has mixed political views, the new wave is more homogeneous politically, with a certain political stance such as being distant from the ruling party and largely motivated by the turbulent political climate and diminishing liberties in Türkiye.

As demonstrated in a number of strands of scholarly works, the evolving political and social structure of Türkiye has been a pivotal factor influencing the migration and non-return decisions of highly skilled individuals, as the country has been undergoing a shift towards an increasingly authoritarian and conservative regime. Elveren and Toksöz (Elveren, 2018; Elveren & Toksöz, 2017) are among the scholars demonstrating the impact of this relationship, especially on the widening gender disparities in Türkiye and the migration decision of highly skilled females.

The authors propose that the deterioration of the secular and democratic character of the Turkish regime over the past decade, as evidenced by the 2017 constitutional referendum that took place under a state of emergency, has resulted in a significant migration of secular individuals from Türkiye including those who are educated and highly skilled. The prevailing socio-political developments, characterised by an escalating authoritarianism and Islamisation, are argued to exert a significant influence on this phenomenon. As articulated by Elveren and Toksöz (2017, p. 18), "as educated people prefer to live in more democratic and politically stable environments as well as to have freer, westernized lifestyles, individually and socially".

A review of the literature briefly outlined above shows that highly skilled migration from Türkiye was initially directed towards developed Western countries, primarily the United States. This trend was driven by factors such as the availability of extensive scientific research opportunities, support for career development, superior working conditions, higher income levels, and an overall improved quality of life. Correspondingly, there has been an emphasis on researching the migratory patterns of individuals to these regions. However, particularly since the 1990s and 2000s, with increasing economic globalization and advancements in information technologies, many European countries have also adopted policies to facilitate this mobility. These policies aim to participate in the global competition, especially in the information technology sector, where there is a growing demand for highly skilled workers (Ouaked, 2002).

As a result of this development, the demographic profile of migrants from Türkiye to Europe has begun to change, leading to the emergence of a new Turkish migrant group in Europe. The conceptualization of "new wave migration" in the literature, highlights the distinct characteristics of the new migrants comparing with the previous migrant cohorts by delving into the factors that influence the migration decisions of these new migrants, their experiences, and the ways in which they position themselves within their host countries. This perspective suggest that new wave migrants distinguish themselves from previous generations of migrants not only by their desire for professional success and higher income but also by different

sources of motivation, such as enhancing their cultural and symbolic capital, experiencing different cultures, testing and discovering themselves, and also escaping social pressures and expectations they had in Türkiye. Studies on highly skilled and new wave migration from Türkiye have primarily concentrated on the most common and prominent destination countries, including developed European nations such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, as well as North American countries like the United States and Canada. Alternative migration routes, such as Greece, which, despite being on the periphery of Europe and lacking economic prosperity, still attracts a specific group of highly skilled migrants from Türkiye, have not been extensively addressed in the literature.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXT: TRANSNATIONAL CALL CENTRE INDUSTRY IN ATHENS

This chapter illuminates the distinctive case of Athens, Greece as a destination for multilingual migrants, including Turkish citizens, who are employed as workers in the transnational call centre located there. It also considers the political economy of call centre work in a wider global context in which both capital and labour are mobile, as well as its emergence in the Balkans and Greece.

3.1 Call Centre Work and Outsourcing in Global Service Economy

In order to contextualise the emergence of the call centre industry in Athens, this section employs political economy as a conceptual and methodological tool to understand the structural features of the knowledge economy in which the call centre industry is embedded (Stevens, 2014). The objective of this discussion is to examine the interrelationship between call centre work and the global division of labour in post-industrial capitalism, with particular attention to the neo-liberal agenda that underpins it.

Call centre work can be typically described as white-collar employment in the service sector that is enabled by the advancing information and communication technologies (ICT). It primarily provides intangible services through a variety of electronic mediums, including telephone, email, texting and recently social media. Furthermore, it diverges from other service sector work in that the worker, workplace, and customer can be located in disparate physical locations (Burgess & Connell, 2006; Stevens, 2014). The aforementioned features enable the provision of services despite geographical distance, making this one of the most suitable industries for outsourcing and subcontracting to third-party service providers, with

the objective of reducing core employment and organisational costs. Consequently, in the event that the requisite infrastructure and a sufficient number of skilled personnel are available, call centre activities can be relocated not only outside the organisation but also can be sent offshore to any location worldwide. The prevalent image of the call centre industry in various global contexts, including India and the Philippines, depicts young, smiling employees in cubicles with headsets, responding to English-speaking customers in remote locations across different time zones. This representation is a consequence of the economic and organisational restructuring process of the service work explained above.

Post-industrialism is defined as a phase in the development of capitalism in which knowledge work and production instead of industrial manufacturing is a determining element of the economy as well as the social organisation of work and even life. The emblematic knowledge-based sectors of the post-industrial economy include the financial sector, the marketing industry, the provision of health and education-related services, and the information and communication technologies services industry. In this manner, call centres—functioning as distant, immaterial service providers that rely entirely on telecommunications technology and ICTs to facilitate the flow of information and knowledge—are argued to fall under the category of knowledge work and production. As Huws has observed, they "represent a microcosm of the post-industrial economy and knowledge production as a whole" (cited in Stevens, 2014, p. 25).

As being one of the salient sectors in the post-industrial economy, the dispersion of the call centres around the globe differs from that of industrial production because of its novel features within the capitalist relations. In industrial production, not only the resources and raw materials, but also the production of goods can be transferable globally with the neo-liberal philosophy free mobility of capital, money and investments through the supporting regulatory frameworks for the sake of the market and profit maximisation. Enabled by the reduced costs and technological developments in transportation and communication, the new international division of labour allows the subdivision of the commodity production process into different fragments and their spatial relocation to the different parts of the world. It usually

refers to deindustrialisation of the advanced economies and the movement of labour-intensive processes of industrial production such as manufacturing to the less developed economies of the world where labour power is cheaper, less protected and more available. However, in knowledge base production of post-industrial economy, global division of knowledge labour is more prevalent where capital moves globally to undertake other aspects of work like services and back-office operations. In this global division of labour, capital benefits from inexpensive human capital, which means skilled workers with necessary communication and language skills and computer literacy, and infrastructure facilities in developing parts of the world where "cultural and historical forces lend to the construction and maintenance of particular labour forces" (Stevens, 2014, p. 57).

David Harvey (1990) characterises this transition as "flexible accumulation", which is marked by the emergence of more flexible and deregulated labour markets, labour processes, products and consumption in extending markets. This is accompanied by significant innovations in communication, technology and transport, which have led to the widespread use of subcontracting and outsourcing. Consumption habits have also changed in today's flexible accumulation in respect to fast changing fashions, instability and difference in postmodernist aesthetic, led to creation of new sectors like "the so-called 'thought-ware' industries (e.g. video games and computer software programs)" (Harvey, 1990, p. 156). The advent of new 'thought-ware' sectors gives rise to the emergence of new employment prospects in the service sector. These may be met by subcontracting certain activities, such as legal, marketing or advertising, to other separate enterprises. This is made possible by the geographical dispersal of economic activities under the aegis of neo-liberal capitalism. An understanding of call centre employment and the global distribution of call centre work, viewed through this lens, would facilitate an appreciation of its fundamental nature and the social processes with which it is associated.

A substantial corpus of literature has emerged over the past three decades, examining call centres as a significant phenomenon within the broader context of globalisation and the evolving nature of work and organisations. Call centres serve as illustrative examples that demonstrate the potential for restructuring and relocating service work

on a global scale, characterised by a high degree of division of labour as observed in industrial mass production (Burgess & Connell, 2006). Like Ellis and Taylor (2006), researchers ascribe the extensive proliferation of call centres to the convergence of political and economic influences: "the impact of deregulation and privatisation, restructuring at industry and/or firm level, the intensification of economy-wide and sectoral competition, the growth of the 'new economy' and, underpinning everything, the system-wide compulsion to maximise profits and reduce costs" (p. 108).

The call centre industry has always been characterised by a spatial dimension, intrinsic to its very nature. This is due to the fact that call centres offer remote services of customer relations, sales transactions and technical assistance across a vast array of product markets and industries, via the utilisation of technology. Although call centres represent one of the industries in today's global capitalism where offshoring and outsourcing is widely used with the objectives of cost minimisation, there are still the ones operates in-house. Even, their genuine globalisation which has expanded considerably in numerous regions across the globe and the reality of offices in the developing world assisting customers in the advanced economies is a relatively recent phenomenon according to Taylor and Bain (2005). This illustrates the presence of increased and multifaceted division of labour within the call centre industry, encompassing both the dispersion of fragmented tasks based on customer segment and product, and the similar levels of work conducted in disparate locations but under varying terms and conditions. Batt et al. (2009) note that the globalisation of business operations and the advent of sophisticated call centre technologies afford employers the ability to strategically determine which operational aspects of their business they wish to retain, which they would prefer to outsource to third parties and which they would prefer to relocate to offshore locations. The ongoing debate provides evidence that firms may utilise subcontractors for the outsourcing and offshoring of call centre work, with the intention of extending, completing or substituting their operations. For example, some firms use subcontractors for the extra hours like weekends, holidays or evenings. Some firms may opt to retain high value-added services within their own organisation, while outsourcing more straightforward tasks. Alternatively, they may

choose to outsource the entire service, but from different centres for tasks that require differentiated skills and remuneration.

It is also important to note that the global spread of call centre services is not an even process, with a significant correlation to historical legacy of specific cultural and linguistic traditions, as well as to the colonial past. The cultural and linguistic constraints give rise to a discernible pattern between the locations of corporations and their service providers. To illustrate, UK firms predominantly utilise call centres in India, Ireland and South Africa. Similarly, US corporations procure services from Canada, Ireland, India and the Philippines, while those in France source from Morocco and Tunisia (Batt et al., 2009).

The majority of academic literature on call centres has concentrated on the labour process, investigating the similarities and differences between call centre work and other work environments, such as industrial production, with regard to aspects such as mass production, technology, extensive division of labour, routinisation and strict control. Despite the evidence that call centre work is not a homogenous entity, comprising a range of configurations (Ellis & Taylor, 2006; Glucksmann, 2004; Taylor & Bain, 2005), there is a general consensus that Taylorised production lines represent the dominant form of call centre labour. Studies have demonstrated that the labour process in call centres exhibits characteristics associated with the Taylorist scientific management, including the dominance of repetitive and scripted work, which is subject to rigorous surveillance and a dearth of employee autonomy. This organisational structure, coupled with a stressful working environment, can give rise to physical and mental health issues for workers (Stevens, 2014). Stevens describes the level of surveillance in the call centre work organisation from a wider spatial lens: “From the construction of workplace culture to the content of voice interactions with customers, and even the entry and exit to call centre facilities, surveillance is a fixture in the arrangement of space and the labour process” (p. 23).

In addition to the widely shared features of call centre work, which require emotional labour, control of feelings, a positive attitude and good interpersonal relationships, as well as stress derived from expected brevity, targets, quality controls, surveys and a

lack of breaks, the global division of labour has been shown to create an additional aspect to these challenges. Leading scholars in the field of call centre research, Taylor and Bain (2005), investigate the migration of voice services to India and its subsequent impact on the distinctive characteristics of work organisation and labour process. Their findings indicate that Indian call centre workers encounter a number of additional challenges in their work due to the nature of their interactions with Western customers based in overseas locations. These challenges include extended working hours, such as night shifts, difficulties in commuting due to safety concerns at late hours, and health issues resulting from disruptions to the normal eating and sleeping cycle. Furthermore, Indian workers are expected to conceal their location and mask their identity by using anglicised pseudonyms, speaking English in a neutral accent or emulating customers' dialect. This can lead to role confusion and, if exposed, may result in racist reactions from customers. Such practices, including language and cultural training, introduce a culturally specific dimension to the psychological pressure inherent to emotional labour. A further study by Russell and Thite (2008) indicates that employees in Indian call centres are more educated than their counterparts in Australian in-house call centres, and their roles are subject to greater oversight. It has been documented that the Indian workforce in call centres comprises highly educated individuals with university qualifications, performing semi-skilled tasks. In contrast, in Australia, this role is perceived as a temporary position undertaken by university students to support their studies. Similarly, Rajan-Rankin (2018) discloses the racialized bodily practice of identity work in the Indian call centres within the frame of global inequalities.

Other studies have challenged the overly pessimistic assumptions regarding the prevalence of extensive labour exploitation in offshored call centre services. They demonstrate the ways in which these jobs can be utilized strategically by employees in a multitude of ways. David (2015) illustrates how transnational call centres in the Philippines have established a novel employment niche for transgender individuals, where the organisational culture of the most global companies provides a secure environment for LGBT individuals. The globalisation of call centre labour in this case has resulted in the formation of a workplace cluster where transgender employment is prevalent, as it provides a viable alternative to other low-status

industries where transgender individuals are highly represented, including sex work. In a separate study, Beerepoot and Hendriks (2013) note that employees engaged in offshore service work in the Philippines utilize the sector as a means of enhancing their prospective employment opportunities within the global labour market. It is proposed that highly educated workers performing low-skill tasks in the Philippines, as is increasingly the case in many developing countries, make strategic use of call centre and other back-office roles in outsourcing companies to gain transferable knowledge and generic skills, including but not limited to: improving English language proficiency, communication skills, interpersonal skills, multitasking abilities, business knowledge and technical knowledge. Professional experience obtained in a global workplace, is perceived as a stepping stone to eventually contribute their career goals in the long term and gain a competitive advantage in the job market, particularly in terms of international opportunities.

All in all, studies presented here depicted the global expansion of post-industrial service sector including the call centre services. The ways and volumes of this expansion as well as the conditions of the labour process in each context have been proven to be not even. Rather it follows and reproduce global inequalities, and already existing power relations.

3.2. Transformations in Balkans and Greece: Transnational Call Centre Industry

Although the global division of call centre labour to the distant locations is widely observed as discussed in the previous section for the large markets whose language speakers can be found elsewhere in globe like English, depending on the colonial and historical past; it is not possibly the case for every language. For example, in Japan, call centres are observed to relocate to the peripheral areas of Japan from the large metropolises with the same cost reduction rationality. However, they cannot easily relocate globally in contrast to the Japan's manufacturing industry which have been globally extended to developing countries, because of the lack of Japanese speakers outside Japan (Arai & Sugizaki, 2003). This concentration tendency towards to the peripheral areas, not to the distant shores, can be also observed in globally as well as

domestically as we see in the Japan case. For example, in the North America, call centres located in Canada and Mexico offers US companies accessible and relatively low-cost labour supply of multilingual speakers, proficient in English as well as French (in the case of Canada) and Spanish (in the case of Mexico), which is otherwise unavailable in the peripheries of the US or offshore destinations like India (Da Cruz, 2018; Stevens, 2014). Moreover, by 'nearshoring' customer services to the closer peripheries in the region, US firms can benefit from the cultural proximity. Indeed, research on call centres in Mexico and the Dominican Republic has demonstrated that many return migrants and even deportees who have lived in the US for extended periods are often employed in transnational call centres due to their fluency in English and high cultural affinity with US-based customers (Da Cruz, 2018; Rodkey, 2016).

Dublin, Ireland is one of the outstanding examples of this tendency, a peripheral location in the European continent where call centres in European countries concentrated. Since the 1990s, Ireland, and in particular the capital city of Dublin, has become known as a pan-European call centre location for large companies operating in multiple regional and national markets. As an English-speaking country, it represents a highly attractive relocation option, particularly for American firms, given the availability of a relatively cost-effective, highly educated pool of labour with language skills as well as foreign investment incentives and available infrastructure (Breathnach, 2000). In these call centres operating on a transnational scale, bilingual personnel predominantly utilise their second languages, acquired during their studies, such as German, French, Spanish and Italian, to serve European markets. Furthermore, these call centres also employ resident non-nationals for other minority European languages and non-European languages (Breathnach, 2000). Breathnach's analysis in this way shows how a city in the periphery integrates into the global economy by carving out a niche function for itself in the international division of labour as a transnational city.

However, in more recent times, a number of new locations in the European periphery have emerged as attractive sites for foreign capital investment, with the objective of relocating certain tasks and services in the knowledge-based economy. For the

relocation of non-English customer service call centres, a growing tendency is to 'nearshoring' to the countries in the Balkans such as Bulgaria and Romania. As illustrated by Todorova (2018), non-Anglophone European capitals, such as German and Dutch investors, can benefit from nearshoring to the post-socialist countries in the Balkans by leveraging the region's multilingual, well-educated, low-wage talent pool, situated in close geographical, cultural and linguistic proximity to Western and Northern Europe. Being in the same time zones and shared European culture and values as well as the political stability as being EU and/or The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members, have attracted foreign investment that consequently created specialisation zones of production and labour in the IT and software development sectors especially in customer services and back-office jobs. The process of nearshoring in the Balkans has also given rise to a number of social and political implications. These include reforms to the national education systems in order to align them with the requirements of the industries, the partial revival and re-embrace of former European imperial influences, and a growing interest in pursuing university education in languages and countries that are relevant to and responsive to labour market demands in the emergent sectors. In addition to Western capital, foreign investment from China, India, and Russia has substantially increased in these sectors within the region, driven by a desire to access European and Western markets from the periphery. One example of this is the establishment call centre offices in former socialist countries by Indian outsourcing companies in order to capitalise on the availability of a cost-effective labour force with proficiency in European languages, further reinforcing the status of the region as a specialised zone in the service of Western companies and clients (Todorova, 2018, p. 823). Foreign investment capital inflow into the Balkans for these specific sectors shows the way the region incorporates to the global economy and EU markets, which also marks the transformations in contemporary capitalism.

In addition to the local labour power with multilingual skills, using migrant labour is also a prevalent practice in these transnational call centres. As previously stated, the labour of return migrants and deportees from the United States is often utilised in call centres located in Latin America. This is due to their proficiency in language and cultural understanding of American society, which renders them well-suited for such

roles. Moreover, the absence of formal education and qualifications hinders their employability in other sectors (Da Cruz, 2018; Rodkey, 2016). In a similar vein, Woydack's (2019) ethnographic research, which focused on a multilingual call centre in London a metropolitan centre with a diverse labour pool, serves as a case in point. This centre, which caters to external clients in any language they request, primarily relies on migrant labour to meet the demand for foreign language speakers. Most of their employees are either recent graduates, skilled but underemployed, using their native languages in the call centres until their transition to the professional jobs in their field of expertise or recent immigrants who do not have English fluency yet and cannot use their previous credentials in the UK. Another case study from Romania supports the idea that transnational call centre industry benefits from international migration. Roşca's (2022) research indicates that for third country (non-EU) nationals residing in Romania who lack destination language skills and whose qualifications are not recognised, the call centre sector offers a straightforward route into the Romanian labour market and a stable income, albeit one that falls short of their skill and qualification levels. Furthermore, research has revealed that call centres in Romania have been found to be willing to streamline the administrative procedures necessary for the employment of third-country nationals. This has resulted in a situation where migrants, who are unable to find alternative employment opportunities, are compelled to seek employment in call centres.

Greece is another nearshore destination for the global call centre industry in the European periphery. Indeed, Greece has become such a striking place for call centre industry that its ability to whip a huge crowd to go on a strike has been mentioned in international media outlets including Guardian (Sainato, 2025). As Koskina (2006) states, call centre sector represents a burgeoning industry particularly in the telecommunications, banking and insurance sectors in Greece. This is especially prominent in Athens, where employment in services and call centres is rapidly increasing. It is an appealing location for multinational companies that conduct outsourcing service operations considering its skilled and educated labour power mostly fluent in any second language available by the economic stagnation and chronic youth unemployment. Moreover, low labour and infrastructure costs when comparing with the EU are thought to be important considerations. Geographical and

cultural proximity to the European and Western markets, sharing similar time zones with the customers and capital headquarters in the core such as the ones in the Netherlands, Germany or the UK also contributes Greece's appeal for the service offshoring. The appealing attributes of Greece are also actively promoted by the government bodies and agencies to attract foreign investment of multinational companies on specific sectors of the knowledge-based economy. A report published in 2018 by Enterprise Greece, an official agency under the Ministry for Economy and Development of the Greek State, portrays Greece as an outstanding global destination for the establishment of international contact service and call centres by highlighting its geographical position in the gateway of three continents, advantageous time zone and flight durations to the main global cities, developed telecommunication infrastructure, top talent workforce, "competitive" hourly wages and real estate prices, political stability and quality of life from EU membership as well as the considerable financial and legal incentives. The same policy report reveals that over 20,000 highly skilled professionals are employed in more than 120 call centres located in Greece which serve as multilingual hubs in the region (Enterprise Greece, 2018). These efforts of promoting Greece's position as a regional hub in data and innovation has successfully attracted attention from US based big technology firms with increased investment and activity in the country as Greece's improving economy and opportunities in growing ICT sector has been documented by International Trade Administration of U.S. Department of Commerce (International Trade Administration [ITA], 2023). Accordingly, American big technology companies including Microsoft, Google, IBM, Cisco, Amazon, HP and Starlink have been expanding their ICT related business operations in Greece. These developments have also attracted public attention and been covered by the news media, for instance greekreporter.com announced 300 million euros investment of French company for an intended data centre in Greece following the giant technology firms from the U.S. (Kokkinidis, 2024).

Similar to the nearshore cases presented above, emerging call centres in Greece also use migrant labour as a source of native language speakers. However, differently, in addition to the migrant stocks already residing in Greece, it is also observed that call centre companies in Greece also advertise for recruitment from abroad by offering

generous relocation packages and sponsorship schemes to its potential applicants. The foreign investment incentive framework proffered by the Greek state facilitates the issuance of residence and work permits for foreign personnel to be hired by the companies concerned, a point particularly emphasised in order to attract investors (Enterprise Greece, 2018, p. 11). Therefore, it can be said that in this case, transnational call centres operating multilingual service activities from Greece largely rely on migrant labour, even it creates a migration stream itself to Greece from different countries and locations. Capital investment to Greece in this case also seems to make use of its location strategically to attract foreign labour power with various language skills. Located in the crossroad of Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia, Greece is in a close proximity to diverse locations, also features being a country in the Mediterranean, offering prospective foreign applicants a particular way of working and living opportunity in a sunny, warm climate as in lifestyle migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016) and digital nomads (Cook, 2022).

3.3. Research Setting

Athens is the primary location in Greece that international call centre companies preferably establish their facilities where they employ multilingual staff, migrants from all corners of the globe including Turkish citizens. Among these companies, one of the most typical and well known, a multinational giant doing outsourcing services for its global clients affirms that more than half of its 9,000 employees are from abroad (Yannoulatou, 2019), as they work in more than 40 languages and dialects and employing people from more than hundred nationalities. The extent of the phenomenon is such that a local in Athens may ask an English-speaking resident if they are also working for that telecommunications company. The multicultural composition of the workforce employed in the call centres in Athens is particularly pronounced in certain areas of the city where the company buildings are situated such as Kallithea, Tavros and Piraeus especially during after-work hours certain cafes and bars are full of English-speaking crowds that eventually change the neighbourhoods' character.

The relocation package that the company provided for the newly recruited workers from abroad includes the flight tickets to Athens, accommodation in a hotel for two

weeks and the real estate agency for the assistance of finding housing afterwards. As a result, migrant workers in their new city tend to find accommodation in shared flats with other call centre workers, concentrating in areas close to the office buildings or at least close to the green metro line (one of the three main metro lines in Athens where call centre facilities are located near its stations), so that they can commute to work easily.

Although Greece is not among the top ten destinations for Turkish citizens living abroad, according to data from the open data portal of the Supreme Election Board of the Republic of Turkey, there were 11,747 registered voters in Greece for the 2023 Turkish general elections (YSK, 2023). The same dataset shows that Germany has the largest number of Turkish citizens eligible to vote, with 1,504,428, followed by France and the Netherlands with 397,711 and 287,202 respectively. Among the Turkish representative offices in 73 countries around the world where ballot boxes have been set up, Greece ranks 18th in terms of the number of registered voters and first if the countries neighbouring Türkiye are taken into account.

The presence of Turkish citizens in Greece, particularly in Athens, has been observed in the Greek media, as evidenced by newspaper articles such as "Hundreds of Turks packing up for Greece" and "Athens an attractive option for Turks looking for a safety net" which appeared in the Athens-based newspaper Kathimerini (Fotiadi, 2018; Kakaounaki, 2017). As Üret (2021) explains, Greece has become a first stop for many people of different backgrounds, including labour migrants working in call centres with employment contracts, irregular political migrants who risk their lives crossing the Aegean Sea or Evros River, and wealthy Turkish Golden Visa investors. In her article, Üret (2021) investigates a new phenomenon of affluent Turkish Golden Visa investors in Greece as lifestyle migrants who invest in Greek real estate in order to obtain migration and mobility rights in Europe in a convenient way, benefiting from an affordable investment programme in the closest neighbour with close geographical proximity and cultural familiarity. A Facebook group called "Atina'da Yaşayan Türkler" (Turks living in Athens) which aims to create a social networking platform for solidarity purposes, is another medium that confirms the growing presence of Turkish citizens in Greece. To date, this online group has 4300 active members, up from 4100 and 3200 in December 2023 and May 2021

respectively, and appears to be used by call centre workers as well as other migrants from Türkiye (political migrants; refugees and asylum seekers, family members, students) living in Athens. Exemplifying the nature of such interactions, Figure 1 and Figure 2 provide illustrative depictions, whilst simultaneously divulging the distinguishing characteristics and practices exhibited by this migrant group as well as the visible traces of their active presence within the urban landscape.

Figure 1: Facebook group post: A call to graduates of the leading Turkish university residing in Athens saying "How many Boğaziçi University alumna do we have in our group? I want to create a network in Greece".

Figure 2: Facebook group post: Graffiti written in Turkish saying "I loved every street of Athens". The post asks "So, which one of you wrote this on the walls of Pangrati (a neighbourhood in Athens)? Come on, we know you're here, so just admit it".

Athens, a capital city in south-eastern Europe, is the main fieldwork of this study, as it is a conjunction where the mobility of both capital and people can be observed in the case of emerging transnational call centres facilitating the mobility of highly educated migrants from Türkiye with the job opportunity and the employment contract. This particular research setting provides a perfect illustration of the links between the neoliberal restructuring of the European economy in the periphery, the expansion of global capitalism and migration. As Kaneff and Pine (2011) argue, every new expansion and incorporation into the global market leads to new possibilities for cross-border movements and population shifts. Another salient feature of this setting as a migration-receiving destination is the economic crisis Greece has experienced subsequent to the global financial crisis of 2008, with its repercussions on the Greek economy and society still being felt today. It is considered as one of the most severe to befall a Western country, which has resulted in drastic decline in country's gross domestic product, escalation of public debt which is largest amount loan received in the history of IMF. The recession and austerity measures resulted in elevated levels of unemployment and impoverishment, precipitated by declining incomes and an absence of social safety nets. The year 2014 marked the highest recorded unemployment rates, with 26.5% of the population being unemployed (Kousis et al., 2022). The job market was particularly challenging for young graduates, as the private sector was adversely affected by the crisis and austerity measures impeded new employment opportunities in the public sector. These developments gave rise to widespread dissatisfaction with the political system and mistrust of institutions in Greek society, leading to demonstrations and civil unrest, and increased numbers of outmigration. The right of free movement within the European Union facilitated mobility to European destinations, with Greece becoming a prominent source country for emigration (Pratsinakis, 2022).

In addition to being a salient emigration country during and after the crisis, Greece also experienced one of the biggest waves of migrant inflow as being EU's main entry point during the so-called refugee crisis of 2015-2016. During that period, triggered by the proliferation of international conflicts including the civil war in Syria, more than 1.2 million displaced people entered Europe applying asylum for international protection in a record number since the World War II (Kalogeraki,

2022). Greece, a country simultaneously grappling with an acute recession, received a record number of registered refugees, amounting to 821,000 individuals, primarily embarking on perilous journeys to reach its islands in the Aegean, notably the island of Lesvos. The concurrence of two crises; sizeable influx of irregular migrants from Asia and Africa and the austerity policies of the economic crisis in Greece led to increased widespread reaction towards migrants and inadequate reception mechanism for the protection of migrants, left many of them stranded with neglect in Lesvos and Athens (Kousis et al., 2022). All these concurrences depict Athens, the research site of this study, and its unique conditions of different migration streams both sending and receiving as well as transit in the wake of economic crisis and economic restructuring.

This chapter began by explaining the research context in which the global call centre industry has spread to different regions of the world in search of available cheap multilingual labour and infrastructure. Using a political economy lens, the chapter attempted to locate this emerging industry that triggers new mobility pathways in the region. Then, the chapter continued with explaining the field setting, the city Athens, where the fieldwork was undertaken, with the objective of examining a tangible segment of the mobility stream that has emerged in the wake of call centres in the city: Turkish migrants who migrated on special work visas to work in the global call centres.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1. Fieldwork and Data Collection

The main fieldwork of this research was conducted in Athens the capital city of Greece, during the period between October 2021 and February 2022. Qualitative research methods were employed in this research to with the principal aim of reaching a detailed understanding of the migration motivations, strategies and processes of migrants within the dynamic nature of these experiences in the receiving context of specific localities. In other words, in order to understand the social phenomenon of highly skilled migration from Türkiye and its complexities within its contextual framework, specifically in the context of the call centre employment in Athens it was deemed appropriate to use qualitative research methods. Snape and Spencer (2003) highlight the key elements of qualitative research as follows which were also reflected in this present study. Accordingly, in qualitative research the aim is to learn about the social and material conditions of people being studied as well as their experiences, perspectives and backgrounds to offer a thorough and nuanced understanding of their social world. To do that sample size is kept small in scale and participants are selected purposively in line with the criteria determined in response to the research question. Data collection process in qualitative research is flexible and usually involves close and interactive relationship between the researcher and the research participants. As a result, the generated data is to be expected detailed, rich and dense which is open to emergence of new concepts and ideas as well as identification of patterns and typologies.

In this present study, basis of the data was collected through field research. Field research is qualitative research that constitutes the practice of conducting

ethnographic case studies on a small group of people over an extended period of time from several months to several years in which the researcher observes, interacts with and records people in their natural environment (Neuman, 2014, p. 51). As the qualitative methods have enabled to use flexible research strategy and range of research techniques, the use of participant observation, interviews, oral history and focus group were combined throughout the fieldwork (see Table 1).

Table 1: Data collection methods and the research sample

Data Collection Method	Research Sample	Time
Pilot interviews (online)	1 female + 1 male = 2 participants	Before the field
In-depth interviews	16 female + 15 male = 31 participants	During the field
Focus group	1 female + 2 male = 3 participants	Last phase of the field
Key Informant interview	1 male participant	Last phase of the field

4.1.1. Pilot Study

Before entering the field, timeframe of the fieldwork was planned and information about the field was collected from variety of sources from online and newspaper articles to YouTube videos. In addition, social media was utilized, a Facebook group named "Atina'da Yaşayan Türkler" (Turks living in Athens) also provided handful of useful information about the field and potential participations of the research. Observing the online interactions of group members and their daily concerns and practices from their perspectives has facilitated familiarity with the field setting. A pilot study was also conducted before entering the field through an online meeting application involving two interviews (4 months and 2 months prior to the field) with participants who have work experience in the call centre in Athens (one was still working there and living in Athens and the other one remigrated to another European country after three years in the call centre in Athens). Pilot studies are small-scale versions conducted in preparation for the main study aiming to test the feasibility of the original study and the suitability of research tools such as interview design (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

Moreover, pilot studies allow the researchers to assess their own capabilities. Pilot studies in this sense are instrumental in preparing the researcher for the actual

research, instilling confidence in their ability to conduct research, and providing the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the field (Marshall et al, 2022). The two interviews conducted online in the pilot phase of this study were in the form of 'unstructured interviews' with the agenda of issues to be explored. As a result of that, interview design for the actual fieldwork was finalised into the form of semi-structured interview questionnaire. Considering the issues of access and sampling, the pilot study served the purpose of to collect more information about the field, provide initial insights about this migrant group, and their work and employment relations in the migration environment.

4.1.2. Sampling

Sampling in this research has revolved around the notion of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling which is widely used in qualitative research for selecting the population of study (Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 78). Neuman (2014) even signifies it as an appropriate sampling strategy for exploratory research and field research in which representativeness and making generalisations are not sought for. In purposive sampling, the goal is to sample the cases and participants strategically in accordance with the research questions. Researchers use their judgement and deliberately chose the sample units based on certain characteristics for their ability to illuminate the research topic. These characteristics may range from socio-demographic ones like age to holding particular shared experiences, roles, locations, identities etc. Therefore, a prescribed selection criteria is applied in qualitative purposive sampling which defines what/who are included or not.

In this present research, participants are purposively selected based on the criteria of sharing certain experience, which is having migrated from Türkiye to Athens, Greece as a part of recruitment program of a transnational call centre company which provides mobility condition of Turkish citizens through the visa sponsorship. That experience defined the study population which is sample was drawn. Participants are approached through snowball sampling technique in the field. Snowball sampling stands out as a useful sampling method in cases where potential participants who

meet the sampling criteria are in a network of communication with each other. This method is predicated on the analogy of a snowball, which, as it rolls, grows by attracting other snow clusters around it, and, as such, the participants, who are few in number at first, direct the researcher to people from their own connections (Neuman, 2014). The utilisation of this approach facilitates the identification of new participants from diverse sources, while the reference system serves to establish trust between the researcher and the participants. Within the boundaries of the defined population, sampling was designed to reflect the diversity as fully as possible. To ensure that, selection of participants especially the gender balance was monitored carefully throughout the research. About the sample size, the objective was to sample reasonably large numbers as long as the practical limits such as time allow, however not with the aim of achieving representativeness, which is not a concern in this instance. Instead, the focus was on ensuring the inclusion of a distinct range of categories as Mason (2002, p. 134) suggests. Research participants were expected to live in Athens at the time of the research where the fieldwork was conducted since their experiences as migrants in this specific context are among the primary objectives of the research. However, current employment at the mentioned call centre was not sought after in the selection of participants as long as they had previous work experience there and their migration was facilitated by the employment contract. Their experiences and thoughts are still considered relevant to the research, as their inclusion shows the diverse and dynamic nature of the movement.

As being a third country national myself, the entry into the field was supported by the utilization of the Erasmus exchange studentship opportunity designed for PhD field studies at the Department of Social Anthropology in Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens. It provided a number of important practicalities including study visa and legal residence permit, university affiliation, access to university facilities and the academic advisory. Following entry into the field, the initial access to the potential participants was mediated by the key gatekeeper, who is a friend of the researcher and has worked at the call centre company in Athens for the last three years. The term “gatekeeper” is used to denote an individual responsible for mediating access to the site for researchers. Bryman

(2012) posits that the utilisation of personal networks, comprising friends, contacts, and colleagues can serve as a conduit for entry into the field. He continues that these individuals, acting as gatekeepers, can play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of research endeavours at subsequent stages. In order to circumvent the risk of being constrained by the particulars of a solitary gatekeeper and their network, an additional gatekeeper was incorporated into the study during the course of the field research. The second gatekeeper was included in the study on the basis of his prior involvement in a previous interview in the form of informal conversation with the thesis supervisor. As a result, the application of snowball sampling technique, in other terms referral or chain sampling, in this research has been initiated from two sources; key gatekeeper and additional gatekeeper (see Figure 3). The names of the participants utilised in the figure have been anonymised, with the colours representing people sharing the same house.

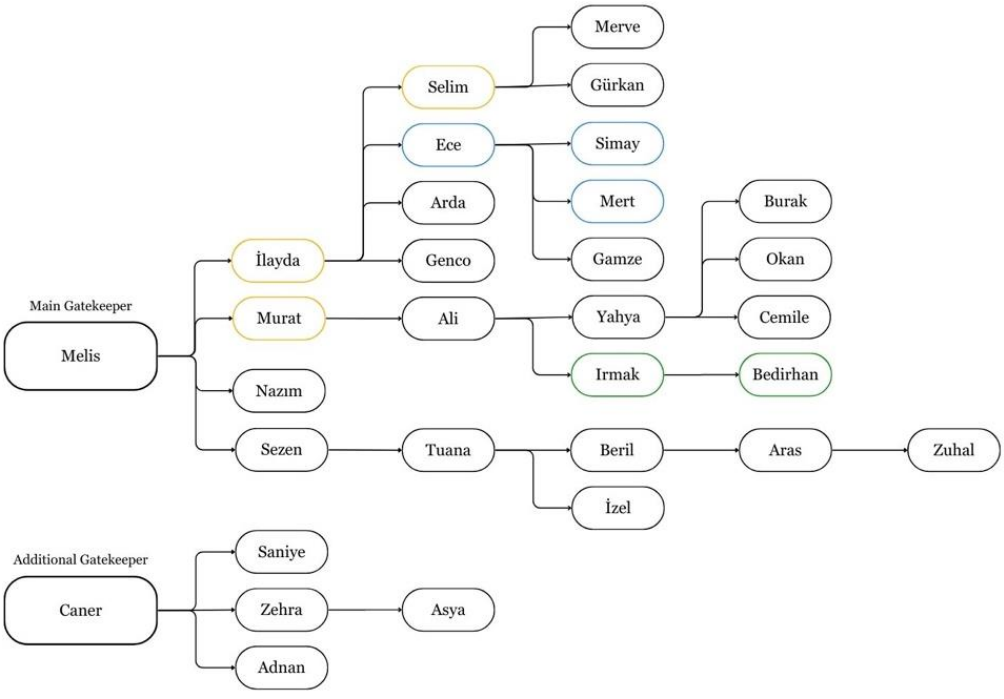

Figure 3: Gatekeepers and the chain of referral in snowball sampling

4.1.3. Participant Observation and Building Rapport

During the fieldwork, my role as a researcher was that of a ‘participant observer’, in the form of ‘participating observer’ as Bernard (2006) explains “outsiders who

participate in some aspects of life around them and record what they can" (p. 347). This approach did not constitute either a 'complete participant', a stance that would involve deceiving the group members and thus raise ethical concerns given the concealment of the researcher's identity, or a 'complete observer', a position that does not expect any interaction between the researcher and the participants. Participant observation is among the most widely employed techniques in ethnographic fieldwork. According to Bernard (2006) one of its comparative advantages in the scientific research is to increase validity because it allows researcher to observe and collect any kind of intimate data that is almost unimaginable to gain in any other ways. Moreover, the presence of the researcher among the people has been shown to engender a marked increase in the trust that people have in the researcher, to the extent that they continue their everyday business and interactions without changing their behaviour. This non-disturbance effect has been demonstrated to engender a marked reduction in reactivity, thus ensuring greater validity.

During my first week of fieldwork, I resided at the apartment of my initial gatekeeper until I resolved the issue with my accommodation. This individual shared the residence with another call centre worker, a recent graduate of Greek national who utilised his second language skills to provide English-language customer service for a prominent technology company. This initial unexpected encounter, for which I was present to observe migrant call centre workers, served to validate the argument presented in the context section. The individual in question was among the considerable number of Greek youth entering temporary employment in the global call centre as they transitioned from university to professional work, a consequence of the global expansion of capital in the knowledge economy, which benefited skilled labour sources in the European peripheries. My presence in their apartment (which also served as their place of work due to the company's home office regulations that were adopted during the pandemic) initially gave rise to questions and suspicion regarding the scope of the research. This was not unexpected, given that the risk of being labelled a spy is an occurrence that is not uncommon when conducting ethnographic fieldwork (Adams, 1999). To overcome this problem, in addition to clearly stating my research topic and the ethical procedure I would follow

to ensure confidentiality, I did not start my research-related activities immediately and devoted the week to showing my appreciation for their support in a reciprocal way. This helped me a great deal in building rapport and gaining access to the wider field. The first weekend I moved into my own apartment, the main gatekeeper texted me to invite me to a tavern with live Cretan music. That night I met İlayda and Murat, and after enjoying mezes, wine and music, I booked my first appointment for an interview.

Although it is true that researcher's access was negotiated ongoingly in the field with new networks and new participants, the co-operation was built smoothly almost in every case. There are two possible explanations for this situation. First, the research objectives were generally considered valuable and relevant by the research participants which in turn increased their willingness to contribute. Second, there was a quite match between the researcher and the participants in terms of key socio-demographic characteristics as well as some aspects of cultural background and experiences. The presence of these matching characteristics was advantageous in the context of data collection, as it facilitated access, fostered the development of social relations, and laid the foundation for the establishment of trust with the participants. Furthermore, these characteristics enabled the researcher to become more involved in the field setting.

Upon entering the field and gaining access through the help of the gatekeepers, in addition to the role of researcher, another social role was assigned and adopted in the field as a result of the ongoing interaction between the participants and the researcher. This social role assumes the researcher's position hovers between a friend, a newcomer, a temporary resident, a curious visitor who wants to explore participants' life in Athens, who also needs guidance and company in this new city and needs help for her research. In order to maintain an equilibrium between these roles, two principal strategies were employed in the field. Primarily, the practice of 'hanging out' as a skill was utilised. This is considered a skill due to the fact that it necessitates the restraint to refrain from asking an excessive number of questions simultaneously upon entering the field. Instead, the act of 'hanging out' fosters the development of rapport, thereby facilitating the discussion of numerous issues that

are pertinent to the research, within the context of everyday conversations, in the presence of the researcher. The second strategy, which constitutes an additional skill, was to present oneself as a 'novice', that is to say, someone who is genuinely interested in acquiring knowledge and requires assistance to meet more people in the limited time available for field research. To facilitate this, I explicitly stated that I have considerable flexibility in my schedule. I mentioned that I am currently on leave from my position in İzmir, which allows me to relocate easily and dedicate more time to engaging with them without any constraints. Additionally, I explained that my affiliation with the university in Athens entails only a minimal workload. I also expressed my willingness to participate in any gatherings, as I am new to the area and seeking social engagement.

As a result of maintaining these two social positionings in the field, I have been invited to a variety of social events by multiple members of the field site. These events have included a company tree-planting event, an improvisation show, board game nights, parties, taverns, barbecues, cafes, walking, shopping, moving furniture together and more. House visits represent an essential component of the research as they facilitate not only the observation of living arrangements, predominantly in shared apartments which are often inhabited jointly with other call centre workers. Furthermore, these visits facilitate the analysis of the working environment, a crucial aspect given the transition of the subjects to remote work arrangements in the period following the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the reorganisation of space as their living and working spaces have become closely intertwined.

4.1.4. In-depth Interviews

A total of 31 in-depth interviews were administered to participants during the time in the field. In-depth interviews were prepared and applied in the semi-structed format. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher and participant engage in a one-to-one interaction. The interviews are conducted in a relatively informal atmosphere reminding a conversation. The interviewer categorises their questions thematically, creating sub-headings to structure the data collection process. Within these sub-headings, the topics to be included are discussed. The questions posed are of an

open-ended nature. A biographical or narrative approach is frequently adopted. In the course of most qualitative interviews, a flexible and adaptable structure is employed, whereby researchers are at liberty to vary the order of questions according to the progression of the interview. It is not uncommon for questions to be omitted or for new ones to be introduced (Mason, 2002).

In accordance with these principles, a semi-structured interview format was employed in this present research. The interview form was divided into five sub-headings, each containing three to ten open-ended questions. The first sub-heading addressed life history, including demographic information such as age, gender, place of birth, educational attainment, and professional experience. The second sub-heading pertained to the migration process. The initial two sections of the interview adopt a biographical and narrative approach with the objective of fostering a sense of ease and comfort for the interviewees. The third section pertains to the subject of work and employment in a call centre, while the fourth section, entitled 'Life in Greece', explores social relations and daily life in the country of migration. The final section aims to ascertain future expectations. The final format of the interview questionnaire is available in the appendices section, provided in both Turkish and English.

The interviews were conducted in a variety of locations, including the homes of the informants, public places such as bars and cafes, and other venues as preferred by the participants. In certain instances, interviews were conducted at the residences of participants' acquaintances who were also involved in the study. As demonstrated in Figure 4, the primary locations from which interviews were obtained are distributed along the green metro line, which traverses the city. This line is located in close proximity to the company buildings, as previously mentioned. Participation in the research project was entirely voluntary. Prior to each interview, an "Informed Consent Form" was dispatched to the respondents, elucidating the research process, ethical procedures, the implications of their involvement, the nature of the research, issues regarding confidentiality and anonymity. Permission was obtained to use a voice recorder, and all interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Field notes were additionally made during the course of fieldwork, in which detailed accounts of

interviews and observations were recorded. Subsequent to the transcription of all interview data, a close reading of the text was conducted in accordance with the grounded-theory approach. This was undertaken in order to identify potential themes. The identification of themes was achieved through a meticulous re-reading of the transcribed interview data, with significant sections highlighted and notes pertaining to the coding process taken. This continuous process of documentation while reading the transcribed text data is termed ‘memoing’ (Bernard, 2006), a technique that was extensively utilised during the data analysis process. Subsequently, the data from the categories that had emerged was collated for the purpose of comparison and consideration of the links between them. The final stage of the data analysis process involved the use of illustrative examples to present the findings in the form of quotations from the interviews.

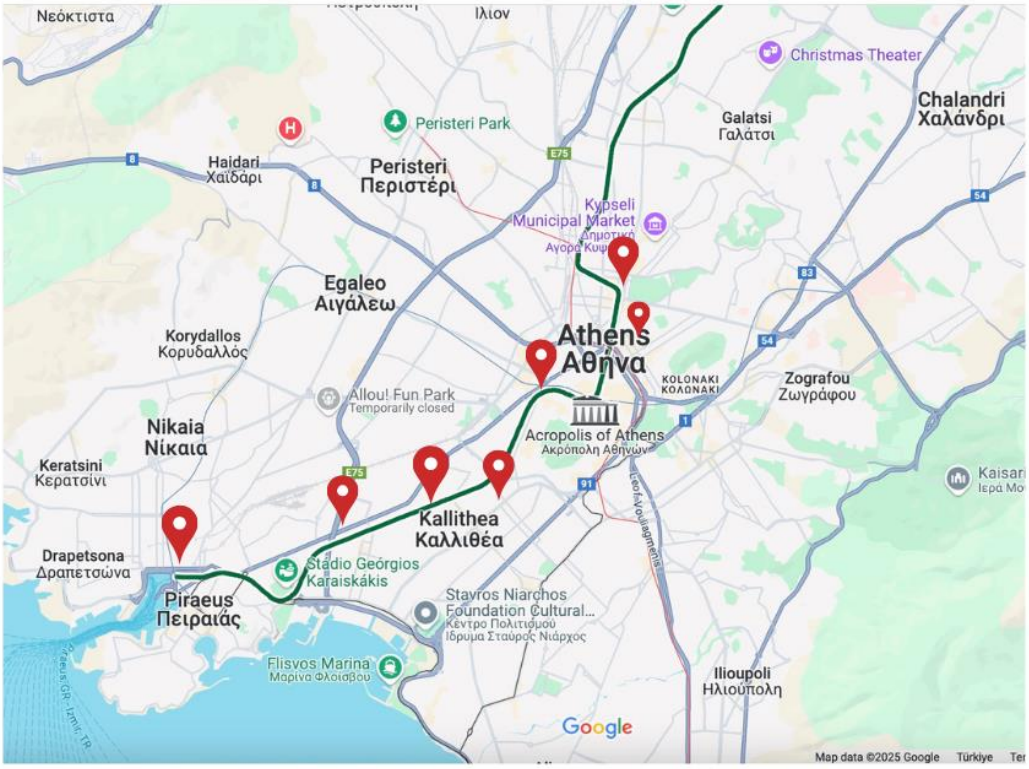

Figure 4: Athens city map: Interview locations and the green metro line

4.1.5. Leaving the Field

In the final phase of the field research, it became evident that the interviews were not producing novel information and that the responses and concepts were repeating

themselves. Upon reaching this point of theoretical saturation, the decision was taken to conduct a focus group discussion, with the aim of verifying this saturation and analysing the preliminary findings as emergent concepts and categories. The objective was to observe the participants' response to the concepts and categories that had emerged from the completed interviews, and to facilitate an open exchange of views and experiences as a way of exercising triangulation. The focus group was composed of a friend group of three participants: two males and one female, all of whom had been in the employ of the company for approximately two years.

Figure 5: Monument of Alexandros Grigoropoulos and Berkin Elvan who tragically lost their lives at the age of 15 due to police violence during street protests in both Athens (2008) and İstanbul (2014). The photograph was taken by the author in Exarcheia in 2021.

As part of the final fieldwork phase, an additional data collection method was employed, in the form of an in-depth interview with a key informant, i.e. a co-owner of a bar in downtown Athens. This establishment is run by political immigrants from Türkiye and is observed to be a popular destination for call centre workers and other migrants from Türkiye to hang out. Before the key-informant interview, I was already invited to that bar by the research participants and been there several times throughout the fieldwork. In this social setting, it is a frequent occurrence to encounter individuals from Türkiye seated at adjacent tables, particularly those who

are professionally affiliated with the same call centre. Moreover, in a number of interviews, this bar and its surrounding area were specifically cited as being among the preferred locations for socialising. The area in which the bar is located is known as Exarcheia, a neighbourhood with a history of resistance and counterculture. Despite the ongoing process of urban gentrification, this neighbourhood has maintained much of its distinctive character, by hosting an alternative and multicultural crowd and promoting sense of community and values like co-existence and solidarity (see Figure 5 and 6). The interview with this key informant aimed to hear the situation from the local gaze in the neighbourhood and also to observe the ways of construction of an immigrant community through a common space of socialization.

Figure 6: A mural and a graffiti slogan on an empty building among many others saying "Dedicated to the poor and homeless here and around the globe". The photograph was taken by the author in Exarcheia in 2021.

4.1.6. Limitations and Research Ethics

From the very moment I entered the field, ethics remained at the core of my research process. I became particularly aware of this when participants were hesitant to

discuss the details of their work. Given the importance of privacy and data protection in the call centre industry, as well as the fact that they work as subcontractors for major companies and are bound by confidentiality agreements, their reluctance was understandable. Since my academic training emphasized that research ethics ultimately rest with the researcher as Ruane (2005, p. 17) noted "every research decision we make, from planning to the disclosure of results, should be made with an eye to ethics", I approached this issue with sensitivity. Consequently, I adjusted the focus of my study, shifting it away from the labour process and concentrating instead on migration and the experiences of migrants. Protecting participants from any form of harm is a fundamental principle of research ethics, which, in this context, includes the risk of job loss or legal action. With this in mind, I placed even greater emphasis on confidentiality and anonymity, ensuring that these aspects were rigorously upheld. As part of this ethical commitment, I chose to forgo visual sociology as a data collection method.

All in all, this study employed qualitative research methods. The primary data was collected during field research via an ethnographic case study conducted between October 2021 and February 2022 in Athens. Prior to entering the field site, a pilot study was conducted involving online interviews with two participants. These interviews were conducted in an unstructured format and served to provide insights into the field and refine the semi-structured interview format for the main study. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select research participants, and they were approached through snowball sampling initiated by two gatekeepers who eased the access of the researcher in the field. In-depth interviews were conducted with 31 participants until the saturation point was reached, in other words, no new insights and perspectives were discovered as the participants' responses began to repeat themselves. Interviews were combined with participant observations throughout the field research and in the final phase, findings were tested with a focus group and a key-informant interview following the reminder "a good ethnography is the result of triangulation, using multiple data collection techniques" (Flick, 2007, p. 92).

CHAPTER 5

NEW MIGRATION: NEW MIGRANT CHARACTERISTICS AND NEW DESTINATIONS

5.1. Who Are They?

The present part of this chapter aims to describe the profile of participants of this research, as a cluster who use certain exit strategies to emigrate from Türkiye. The primary objective is to systematically identify and analyse any patterns that may exist within this group. By this means, it also becomes possible to differentiate the characteristics and gain insights about the actors of this group: actors who follow this specific path as a strategy to exit from Türkiye and be a part of global labour market through this mobility.

5.1.1. Demographics

The demographic information of the participants includes age, gender, education (last degree they earned), last city of residence in Türkiye, marital status and residence period in Greece by the interview date. The information can be located in Table 2, which has been arranged in chronological order according to the sequence in which the interviews were conducted. It should be noted that the names of the participants have been anonymised. In addition to this basic data of personal profiles, other issues to take into consideration revealed during the interviews which are overseas experience either for the purposes of education, volunteering or work and call centre experience in Türkiye.

The age range of the participants is between 25 and 44 with the average of 31 and median of 30 years old. Therefore, it might be concluded that this cluster is mainly

composed of individuals in their late twenties and early thirties at the time of the interviews. The age distribution of the participants in our case is compatible with the national migration trends. The latest International Migration Statistics report published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK, 2023) indicates that, in 2022, the largest age group among those who migrated from Türkiye was 25-29 years old, comprising 15.8% of the total, followed by the 30-34 age group at 13.4%.

Among the total 31 participants, 16 are female and 15 are female. The sampling was generated with the aim of equal representation of all genders, as no numerically dominant gender has been observed in the field. In addition to that, there are three openly LGBT people among the participants, two gay man and one bisexual women. The inclusion of LGBT people into the sampling was not purposive, but a natural consequence of the cluster's feature. This is also highlighted several times in the interviews with participants and other key respondents.

The education levels of participants are considered high when compared to those of previous labour migration streams from Türkiye, as well as to the overall education levels within the population in Türkiye. According to the National Education Statistics 2023 published by Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK, 2024), the proportion of higher education graduates including associate, bachelor, master and doctoral degrees in the population aged 25 and over is 24.6% in Türkiye. This aligns with the noticeable improvement in the education levels of migrants in OECD countries, as well as the rising educational attainment globally (Arslan et al., 2014).

All of the participants involved in this research had entered higher education with 5 cases of dropping out. All in all, among the 31 participants 26 have competed tertiary education; 18 have bachelor's, 4 have master's and 4 have associate diploma. Associate and bachelor's degrees are obtained from a university in Türkiye in all cases. In case of the masters, 2 participants earned their degrees not from a university in Türkiye but a university in abroad namely the UK and Hungary. Also, among the 18 bachelor's degree graduates, 4 had begun their master's education either in Türkiye or abroad one case in the USA and one case in Taiwan but did not complete the requirements successfully. Completed or not, this proves this cluster's interest in

advancing their human capital through education and gaining experience in the international arena. In addition to that, all participants have at least an intermediate level of English. The acquisition of English language skills varies according to the personal background of the participants, as some started at an earlier age through private schools and courses, but for most the main basis was high school and university education supported by personal efforts and time spent in abroad.

All of the participants taken place in the research have urban backgrounds, they have either born or grew up in metropolitan municipalities in Türkiye. The collected data also provides information on the participants' last city of residence before migration, predominantly large metropolitan areas in Western Türkiye: 16 from İzmir, 7 from İstanbul, and 3 from Bursa. Domestic migration was common among the participants before their international migration to Greece, as they relocate with the purposes of education, work, or as return to origin cities after graduation.

This movement of domestic migration within Türkiye which towards developed big cities in the Western part of the country also involves lifestyle considerations and career prospects, such as Western oriented social practices, liberal values, entertainment attractions, international workplaces and opportunities for personal development. From the personal stories of the participants, it is possible to propose the following that, they were not in total statis or immobility even before their international migration which would suggest significant insights about the characteristics of the cluster we are exploring and their motivations.

Considering the marital status of the participants, this movement is largely a single migration. During the course of decision and migrating, only one participant in the cluster migrated together with their spouse from Türkiye. The rest migrated as single, with the exception of three cases where the decision to migrate was taken to join a partner there, all of whom were Greek nationals. At the time of the field research three participants were married, and none of the participants had children. The presented demographic data indicates the importance of the life-course trajectories and the life-course stages in migration decision.

Table 2: Participants' demographic profile

#	Nickname	Gender	Age	Time in Athens (in years)	Last city in Türkiye	Education
1	İlayda	F	29	2	İzmir	Bachelor's drop out
2	Selim	M	35	3	İzmir	Associate degree
3	Merve	F	30	3	İstanbul	Associate degree
4	Murat	M	29	4,5	Gaziantep	Bachelor's drop out
5	Gürkan	M	30	3	Ankara	Bachelor's drop out
6	Ali	M	31	5	İzmir	Bachelor's degree Master's drop out
7	Yahya	M	35	4,5	İstanbul	Bachelor's degree
8	Burak	M	44	4	İstanbul	Bachelor's degree
9	Okan	M	30	4	İzmir	Bachelor's degree
10	Nazım	M	34	4	İzmir	Bachelor's degree Master's drop out
11	Caner	M	32	5,5	İzmir	Bachelor's degree
12	Irmak	F	32	5,5	Bursa	Bachelor's degree Master's drop out
13	Bedirhan	M	26	5	İzmir	Associate degree
14	Cemile	F	41	6,5	İzmir	Bachelor's degree
15	Saniye	F	37	2	Bursa	Bachelor's degree
16	Zehra	F	25	2	Bursa	Bachelor's degree
17	Adnan	M	36	2	İzmir	Bachelor's degree
18	Melis	F	29	3	İzmir	Master's degree
19	Ece	F	29	2 months	İzmir	Bachelor's drop out
20	Simay	F	30	1 month	İzmir	Master's degree
21	Mert	M	30	2	İstanbul	Associate degree
22	Asya	F	27	2	İzmir	Bachelor's degree
23	Sezen	F	27	3,5	Trabzon	Bachelor's degree
24	Gamze	F	30	4,5	İzmir	Bachelor's degree
25	Tuana	F	31	4,5	Malatya	Bachelor's degree
26	Beril	F	29	4,5	Mersin	Bachelor's degree
27	İzel	F	32	4,5	İzmir	Bachelor's degree
28	Arda	M	29	5,5	İstanbul	Associate degree
29	Aras	M	31	4,5	İstanbul	Master's degree
30	Zuhal	F	32	7,5	Ankara	Master's degree
31	Genco	M	36	4 months	İzmir	Bachelor's degree Master's drop out

They represent a group who are experiencing transitions in their lives with major events such as leaving the education, graduation, entering the labour market, unemployment, divorce, changing jobs, changing cities, overseas experience. The

life-course stages they are in as single, childfree young adults with no clear career structures but holding certain education and language skills as well as desire to exit unsatisfactory conditions in Türkiye and try out life chances abroad especially in Europe influence their decision to migrate with temporary work contract at the call centre. This means that they are in a stage of life that they have less hurdles to prevent them being mobile for the unpredictable life and career ahead.

5.1.2. Overseas Experiences

As previously indicated at the outset of this chapter, it became evident that overseas experiences were a common occurrence among the participants. These experiences are observed to became significant parts of their identity formation that has also shaped their worldview and future decisions. The analysis of the interview data irrefutably demonstrated that such experience has a profound impact on the idea of living abroad at some point in their life course. Over two-thirds (21) of participants had overseas experience at least once, either during their studies or afterwards for education, volunteering or work purposes. These experiences were primarily related to the European Union student exchange programme, i.e. Erasmus, or other mobilities for educational purposes such as Master's education and graduate scholarships abroad. Others involved participation in international youth volunteering programmes, such as the one coordinated by the European Commission, in which young people went to another country in Europe and worked on a non-profit basis. Another striking discovery here is that a significant number of participants engage with such programmes abroad more than one time.

In depth analysis of the interviews about the overseas experience before migration to Athens provide compelling evidence of two important conclusions. First, the pattern of previous experience abroad in various ways among the participants clearly demonstrates their existing interest, curiosity and desire to experience life abroad. Secondly, the experience itself further boosts the idea of living abroad for several reasons.

Arda (M, 29), born and raised in İstanbul migrated to Athens almost 6 years ago through work visa and he has been working in the same company since then. His

account of his enthusiasm for the Erasmus application process and subsequent experiences provides a clear illustration of the point discussed here:

> I've always had a strong interest in English, sparked by both games and movies. My mother used to watch a lot of films, and I was lucky enough to watch many of them with subtitles. I also played a lot of games, so I picked up a good foundation in English on my own. Eventually, I decided that I wanted to participate in the Erasmus program. As high school was nearing its end, I started thinking more seriously about going abroad. By the time I was in my first or second year of university, I was already set on the idea. That's why I chose to start my university studies in English. I enrolled in an English prep year and then continued with my major in Radio, Television, and Cinema. Determined to study abroad, I did everything I could to make it happen. I was constantly in touch with our Erasmus coordinator, attending meetings and preparing for the required exams. I went to Poland for Erasmus, to Krakow. Living in Krakow was the biggest experience of my life. I couldn't have imagined an Erasmus experience being this great. I truly made the most of it, doing everything I could. I met amazing people, broadened my perspective, and even started a relationship with a wonderful Spanish girl. We travelled to Spain, Hungary, the Netherlands, Belgium—so many places, saw so many things. Originally, I was supposed to stay for six months, but I ended up staying for around nine months. Then, I came back. I had to return to Türkiye and finish a half-term at my university because I didn't have enough credits. but once I was back, I felt restless. Living in İstanbul, with all its hustle, felt unbearable after being abroad. I realized I had to do something. So, after coming back from Erasmus, before even finishing school, I started looking into work opportunities abroad, language schools, and similar options.

The narrative under scrutiny here highlights an aspiration to experience life abroad, and it is imperative in the context of his life decisions, as evidenced by his decision to build an educational pathway for himself. Furthermore, the experience he gained as an Erasmus exchange student served to inform and influence more significant decisions in his life course. Similar experiences shared by Beril (F, 29), who on the day of our interview was preoccupied with wedding preparations for her Greek fiancé, whom she had met in Athens. She migrated as single, immediately following her graduation without any previous professional work experience. After four and a half years in Athens, she was employed in the same call centre company, having recently been promoted. She explains how she wanted to try out her aspiration to live abroad through Erasmus exchange programme and its impact on her decision:

> I've never really felt like I belonged anywhere. For as long as I can remember, I always had this feeling that I would probably end up living abroad. When I went to Poland for Erasmus, I really wanted to test that feeling. I figured I had nothing to lose—if anything, it would give me clarity. And it did. Once I was there, things became clearer in my mind: I realized that I don't want to return to Türkiye for good, or spend the rest of my life there. Erasmus helped me gain more confidence in both my English and myself, and it also made me see that, when it comes to choosing between living abroad or in Türkiye, life abroad feels much more appealing to me. Right after graduation, I applied exclusively to international job postings—I didn't apply to a single place in Türkiye. Interestingly, this was the first place that got back to me.

Originally from a small town in eastern Anatolia, Tuana (F, 31) completed her undergraduate studies in the Department of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations at one of the long-established universities in eastern Anatolia. After graduating, she wanted to become a civil servant and prepared for the national exam with extra training and classes. After a long and difficult process and several failed attempts, she found herself in a situation of psychological distress and low self-esteem due to the long-term unemployment she had experienced. She was also frustrated by what she described as a 'corrupt' and 'unfair' system based on nepotism and felt hopeless. Then, she heard about volunteering projects in Europe from a friend of hers. She explains that after volunteering abroad, she decided she wanted to live in Europe:

> In these EVS projects, they provide everything you need; work permit, a place to stay. They even give you some extra pocket money. I got accepted into a project in Poland. There, you work with children in a kindergarten, and you can do whatever project you want with the kids. When I got accepted, I was so happy. I felt like I was truly alive for the first time, like people were actually aware of my existence, because psychologically, I used to feel like I didn't exist. I lived in Poland for 6 months. Then I had to leave because the 6 months were ending, and my visa was expiring. I didn't want to return to Türkiye, because there was nothing I could do there. I thought, 'Maybe I'll stay here, find a job,' and even the parents of the children at the kindergarten where I worked in Poland helped me. We applied for many jobs, but there's a big issue with work permits in Poland. There, I realized how free I felt. When I left Türkiye, I truly felt very free. You're very free, even in terms of sexuality, you can talk about whatever you want. People don't gossip, they say things to your face, they don't work behind your back. They make you feel like you matter. The lifestyle in Europe made me very happy, too. Of course, Poland and here (she means Greece) are very different. In Poland, it's

> more regulated; there were so many rules. But during that time, I saw a lot of countries. We travelled together, hitchhiking and all that with friends. I just didn't want to return to Türkiye anymore, especially since I grew up in a very conservative city, and I had no other alternatives.

Melis (F, 29), a promising graduate from İzmir who completed a double major programme with two bachelor's degrees, also participated in the Erasmus programme during her university studies and spent a semester in Hungary. In a very similar way with the other cases, after the Erasmus experience, her interest in opportunities abroad and especially in Europe increased and she took steps in this direction after graduation. She then spent another two years in Hungary for her master's on a full scholarship, followed by a two-month funded summer school at a prestigious research centre in Budapest. Her next stop in Europe was France, where she spent a year volunteering on a collective farm. She talks about the Erasmus experience as a turning point in her life, where she made up her mind about what she wanted to do as she sought opportunities relying on her human capital:

> Before coming here, I had no thoughts of living or staying in Türkiye. I just remember that when I went on Erasmus, I realized how much I enjoy the process of things becoming more concrete in an unfamiliar place, in the midst of the unknown. It was already a decision made back then… After my master's and summer school, I wanted to take a break from academia and wanted to learn something new, I was also very tired of living in the city. I started looking into EVS programs, also known as European Voluntary Service Projects. I mostly applied to places in France and Spain because I had taken French as a second language in university. So, I went to a village in the south of France. This project was focused on sustainable living. I went there, and there was a woman who was a botany teacher. Together, we spent a year working on everything from making the soil fertile to creating a small field. I also worked on how to make furniture from an architect there, he taught me how to use a software program for drawing. Over the course of a year, we built two ecological houses. We also built a greenhouse together using discarded window frames.

She adds that the idea of moving abroad did not scared her at all when she was considering the job opportunity at the call centre in Athens: "Since I was already used to living abroad, outside of Türkiye, I didn't come with much excitement. But I came thinking, 'Well, it's another country, another city.' Honestly, staying in Türkiye didn't really suit me also".

As the examples above reveal, previous experience abroad, especially in Europe is a common pattern among the participants which evidently has a great impact on their migration decision. These experiences have generally been gained during or shortly after their years of higher education, which provide a new lifestyle and set of values, including a love of travel, lifelong learning, interest in other cultures and an international outlook. It also provides a base of knowledge and first-hand experience for comparing political, social and economic circumstances they have in Türkiye and elsewhere. The time spent abroad not only encouraged the participants but also prepared them for further international mobility by reducing their perception of risk based on previous practical knowledge and by increasing their confidence in language and communication.

The importance of past experiences in abroad especially through educational purposes for the future migration has been noted in other studies (Bartolini et al., 2017). Based on their investigation on European Erasmus student exchange programme, according to Parey and Waldinger (2011), studying abroad increases the likelihood of individuals to work in a foreign country later in life. Educational mobility programmes have been shown to have an impact on subsequent labour market mobility by increasing the interest in foreign cultures that leads students to seek employment abroad (Parey and Waldinger, 2011, p. 219). However, in contrast to Parey and Waldinger's findings, which suggest a high location-specific component in return tendencies, i.e. “students tend to return to work in the country or region where they studied abroad” (p. 217), none of the participants who had experience abroad, with the exception of one, had their experience in Greece. Yet, a great majority of them except four participants, had their time abroad some other locations in Europe. The research participants seemed to rely on broader categorisations that they experienced during their visit and that they believed to apply to most European destinations, such as European values, European way of life, greater emphasis on human rights and democracy, labour standards and regulations. Another likely explanation for this difference in location choice could be derived from limited mobility rights that unable the participants from returning these countries they have been in, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

5.1.3. (Un)employment Experiences

In terms of the previous work experience and professional background, two typologies emerge in the cluster. The first has no previous professional work experience other than casual part-time jobs they have worked as students, internships or volunteer work. The second group, on the other hand, had a history of employment, either in Türkiye and/or abroad, and were either unemployed at the time or deeply dissatisfied with their vulnerable position and precarious working conditions. Moreover, apart from a few exceptional cases, many of them were employed in jobs that did not correspond to their education.

The first group, lacking work experience, mostly composed by ones who either suffered from unemployment in Türkiye after graduation or expected to do so based on their perceptions of labour market conditions. In addition to that, they were not appealed by the available job and career opportunities for building a future for themselves in Türkiye. Their concerns about a work life in Türkiye include lack of meritocracy and rising clientelism both in public and private sectors, as well as undesirable and insecure employment conditions and career prospects. The decision to migrate without any prior employment in Türkiye also reflects their criticism of Turkish society and its institutions, which they perceive as becoming increasingly corrupt and unjust. This group represents almost a quarter (8) of the total number of participants. And strikingly, all of them have overseas experience in their lives.

Sezen (F, 27), a participant who migrated to Athens at the age of 24 upon completion of her studies in Ankara with a successful grade, which was followed by a two-month Erasmus internship in Italy, states that she did not even consider applying for jobs in Türkiye. Instead, she focused her efforts on pursuing opportunities abroad. Furthermore, her account illuminates a facet of the extant labour market structure that many other participants also identified as a source of discontent.

> After I returned back to Türkiye from Italy, from my Erasmus internship, I thought that I could prepare for the language exam, IELTS, to apply master programmes abroad. I was generally considering Germany, as it's a good country for my major, industrial design. I was also looking at industrial

> design jobs abroad, as well as master's programs. I never even applied for a job in Türkiye. I had a ready portfolio, and there were maybe jobs I could have gotten, even places I could have entered through connections, though that's something I would never do. But even with that possibility, I pushed it aside. Because, to be honest, I particularly didn't want to work in Türkiye. After seeing the hopelessness and the constantly deteriorating economy in the country, I wanted to go somewhere else.

Another participant with no previous work experience, Melis (F, 29), also mentioned the importance of connections in finding a job in Türkiye, as this discouraged her from staying in Türkiye as well as the working conditions that require long hours:

> I didn't believe I could find a job in Türkiye either. First of all, I didn't have many connections left in Türkiye, and you need networking to find a job. I wasn't satisfied with the lives people were living, or with the stories my friends were telling. In many corporate jobs in Türkiye, when you work overtime, you don't get paid for it. There are people far more experienced than me in Türkiye, working 10, 11, 12 hours a day for years without receiving any overtime pay, continuing their lives without getting any of their rights. Honestly, staying in Türkiye didn't appeal to me. I was disturbed by the general social problems and I could see that things were getting worse.

Not only unemployment but working conditions that were offered during their job search process in Türkiye as a type of underemployment also seems to be highly influential in decision to migrate. In the cases of Caner (M, 32) and Gamze (F, 30) this pattern is clear as they compare the job offers and working conditions. Caner (M, 32) admits that unsatisfying labour market conditions in Türkiye were determinant for him:

> I also had a few job interviews in Türkiye after I graduated. In fact, it happened like this: when I received an offer from the call centre company (in Athens), I was also interviewing for another job (in İstanbul), which was more like a small, family-run business company doing marketing. The salary they offered me was 1,300 liras. It's incomparable to current conditions, but it was very low. At the time, if I had found a much better job and started with a good salary, I probably wouldn't come here to the call centre.

Gamze (F, 30) shares a similar story:

> After graduating and returning to my hometown, İzmir, I started looking for a job, and that's when I realized I couldn't find one. While searching, I started

> to think, 'Maybe I could teach, or anything related to literature would work as well.' I was interested in marketing, and was researching those opportunities too. I applied to many places, but since I couldn't find a job, life in Türkiye became a bit stressful. At the places I interviewed, they talked about working 7 days a week. We're human, we need vacations. And working 7 days a week for minimum wage— I don't remember how much it was at the time, and I'm not sure about now, but they were talking about minimum wage, etc. As things went on like this, and with my mom's support, telling me, 'You can leave, you can go, it's no problem for me, I think you should go, don't look back,' I thought, 'Okay, then maybe going abroad is the answer.'

For the participants who can be categorized under this group, the call centre job in Athens is the first professional work experience after their time in higher education. Therefore, in spite of the different fields of study and educational backgrounds, they did not have an expertise in any area to build a career on. The lack of expertise, combined with little or no investment of time and effort in a specific occupation and career, has made the decision to migrate easier for this group, as it reduces the number of risks taken.

In terms of the employment histories of the participants, the second group represents the ones who has previous professional work experience prior to their migration. Within this group, as the data analysis suggest that employment related problems including precarious working conditions, lack of future prospects, mobbing, underemployment and periods of unemployment were common. Experiencing unsatisfactory conditions in the employment arena fuels the already growing general discontents in other fields for the participants concerning the social and political circumstances prevails in the country.

İlayda (F, 29) expresses her discontent about the wages and precarious working conditions in her profession as a translator in İstanbul. She dropped out of university in the final year of her studies and started to work in other jobs.

> My friends from faculty were working at translation offices for ridiculous wages. The minimum wage was 1,600 TL, and I think they were starting with a salary of 1,500 TL. At that time, I was earning 5,000-6,000 TL per month from a restaurant in Bebek. This is very sad… I realized something was going wrong and thought, "I need to escape from here and move on, save myself.".

As in the case of İlayda, migration is also an act of criticism of existing conditions in the home country, a way of coping with a perceived unjust and broken system in which education and contribution to work and society are not valued. Undesirable conditions of work and employment here are not only derived from the economic factors but coexist with broader socio-political considerations. In this way, supporting the main arguments in the works of Bartolini et al. (2017) and Groutsis et al. (2020) on young highly educated migrants from crises-stricken Southern European countries, migration through work allow participants to reclaim their distorted self-respect and recognition by escaping from deteriorated circumstances to places where they believe fairer and better socio-economic and political conditions exist. Same concerns also apply for Zehra (F, 25), she was disappointed with the working conditions and work culture that she experienced in Türkiye, which she thinks, were dominated by a lack of work-life balance and opportunities for personal growth.

> I started an internship in the accounting department, but it wasn't good at all—I wasn't doing any real work. After the internship ended, they offered me a full-time job. So, I started working there and stayed for two months. Though I told them I wanted to work abroad and would be attending interviews for that, they accepted. The reason I wanted to work abroad was because in Türkiye, you start with minimum wage, which was around 2,200 lira at the time, in 2019. I had started working, the salary wasn't enough for anything. Yes, I was living with my family, and I didn't have major expenses, but I couldn't go out or travel anywhere. I had only one day off per week, which wasn't enough for anything. On top of that, the education level of the people I worked with wasn't great. Sure, they had developed themselves in accounting, but there was nothing to talk about with them—no perspective.

She was also disappointed with living in a society in general that place little value to education, and she saw the solution by leaving the circumstances for personal emancipation. She explained her concerns as:

> Due to the education level, everyone around me—except for my friends—had such a low level of education that I could easily understand the things they talked about. The only topics of conversation were shopping and gossip; no one had any concern for self-improvement, including my own family. I honestly wanted to leave because I feared I would end up the same way. When I went to Slovakia, I saw that we, the Turks, had the lowest level of English. We were at the very bottom in everything—the worst education, the

> worst English skills. This really upset me, and I didn't want to be like that. Partly due to education and the economy, I know that educated people aren't valued in Türkiye. People from Boğaziçi, METU, and similar institutions are all starting to leave the country because they aren't appreciated.

Labour market conditions and the satisfaction with employment in the home country with regard to not only income but also career opportunities, quality of life, and future prospects evidently have a great impact on migration intentions.

Interestingly, among the participants who had previous work experience, nine of them, almost a third of the total, had worked in call centres in Türkiye before migrating. Many experienced this as underemployment after a period of long-term unemployment or precarious work. Individuals who have been unable to find decent work in their own fields end up taking call centre jobs, relying on their language skills. This phenomenon of middle class educated youth being employed in the call centre industry is not unique to Türkiye but is evidently prevalent in other contexts such as Portugal and India (Matos, 2012; Murphy, 2011). Call centre jobs offer participants safe, clean working conditions with above-average pay, where they can use their second language skills to avoid unemployment. Ali's (M, 31) story is a good example that illustrates the case of youth unemployment and consequent underemployment. As an engineer in postgraduate studies, he says he had a truly miserable time due to long-term unemployment and economic problems. He explains how he ended up working in a call centre in Türkiye despite his qualifications due to the precarious and poor working conditions in the labour market:

> I was down to my last bit of money—300 lira in my pocket. I was thinking for how long I could eat only pasta... I hadn't completed my military service, and no one wanted to hire me. You know how it is, in most workplaces, when you start a job, you sign your resignation letter along with your contract; you just leave the date blank. I interviewed with many companies, even big ones, but I couldn't find a job in the chemistry sector… In fact, I no longer see any harm in saying this. I went to the AKP's (ruling party) youth branch and asked for help. And they really did find me a job—sorting trash on a recycling line at a recycling plant. I could only get there by taking two different buses, no meals provided, and minimum wage. I said, 'Thank you very much.'. I applied maybe 5000 jobs online that night. One of the job applications that got a response was from a call centre working for an airline. Since they couldn't find anyone who spoke English, I was able to get the job,

> especially because I had scientific papers published and could give presentations. I could use English in everyday situations. The reason I got that call centre job was because I could speak English, not because of my university education.

Simay (F, 30) shares an extremely resembling story. She admits that she refused to work under given conditions considering her qualifications; she holds a master's degree in social sciences, fluently speaks English, spent time in abroad for multiple projects.

> About a month before completing my master's thesis, I started working at a call centre in İzmir because I had to get a job at that point. I applied to many places in İzmir. I actually tried to get into international trade. I even went for interviews with a couple of companies in İzmir. However, the salary they offered was inadequate. I didn't think it was fair. I didn't accept the offer. Earning 3,000 lira for doing professional work, especially if you speak a foreign language and have international experience, is not an acceptable amount in Türkiye. It really feels like exploitation to me. They expect you to have the best skills and qualifications in everything, but in return, they don't offer a fair salary, and everyone expects you to go along with it. I had to continue working at a call centre that offered a better salary.

Similarly, İlayda (F, 29) chooses to use her language skills at call centre under the absence of other professional opportunities. She says:

> I honestly didn't want my knowledge of English and German to go to waste, so I thought, why not make use of them? It's not that I want to belittle the jobs people do, but I didn't want to work somewhere for minimum wage either. The call centre came to mind because, career websites automatically suggest these jobs to you based on your cv.

Working at the call centre for this group, was considered as a stopgap, a way out of unemployment or working in worse conditions with meagre wages elsewhere. Call centre jobs serve instrumentally as a means to an end for young people in many locales today, where stagnated labour markets unable to offer the opportunities (Lloyd, 2012). For example, Aras (M, 31) described how he began working at a call centre immediately after graduating from university in İstanbul, primarily to earn his own living and finance his master's studies. After a few years at the call centre, he moved to another job in his chosen field, which he thought was better suited to him and his qualifications:

> I started working in Türkiye after I graduated. It wasn't the job I had in mind when I graduated, of course, but it was one of the most viable options for sustaining myself in İstanbul and maintaining my financial independence from my family… While working at the call centre, I also pursued my master's degree. I completed an MBA in Business Management. I managed to handle the financial situation this way… It had been nearly 2.5 to 3 years in the call centre industry, and I didn't want to stay any longer because it wasn't the career I envisioned for myself. I didn't find it suitable for me. I found a job that I believed was directly related to my field and career path.

In summary, the unemployment, underemployment and precarious working conditions that dominate the Turkish labour market, whether perceived or experienced, are one of the most frequently cited factors driving migration. Through migration, participants aim to leave undesirable conditions and achieve better work-life balance and quality of life by working under European labour standards that assumed to protect employees' rights better.

5.2. Leaving a Context with Multiple Crises

In the previous section, it was discussed that how employment related factors influence the migration decision for the young and educated adults from Türkiye. Those employment related factors including "being unemployed, in vulnerable employment, or dissatisfied with the prevailing employment conditions" have been also identified in the previous empirical studies as having significant effect on triggering migration (Etling et al., 2020, p. 1397). In particular, research focusing on Southern European countries such as Greece, Italy and Spain, which were hard hit by the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008 and subsequently show the profound impact of the crisis and its multiple repercussions on migration patterns (Bartolini et al., 2017; Groutsis et al., 2020; Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2014). As research shows that in times of crisis, the young and educated, not necessarily unemployed, are most likely to migrate for better employment and life opportunities. Therefore, economic grievances, when combined with political grievances such as widespread corruption, nepotism and lack of meritocracy, as well as a sense of powerlessness to change the situation at home for the better due to a lack of confidence in democracy, institutions and the rule of law, are more decisive for migration. Multiple crises that

have been defining feature of the Turkish society in the past 10 years mirror the above arguments as triggering migration of the educated youth.

Türkiye has been experiencing a serious financial and economic crisis since 2018. The ongoing crisis is marked by the currency crashes of 2018 when the lira lost its value in the first nine months of the year by 72% against to dollar (Steinberg, 2022). The currency crisis of 2018 as Turkish lira steadily losing its value has been followed by cost-of-living crisis with high inflation rates (Altayli, 2024; Michaelson, 2023). Salaried workers are among the most affected groups as their real wages and purchasing power are decreasing against the increasing prices of the consumer goods (Steinberg, 2022). Significant declines in economic growth in times of crisis also affect the job prospects of individuals by aggregating rate of unemployment and lay-offs. In Türkiye, the average time to secure initial employment was 14.4 months for those holding a bachelor's degree and 15.9 months for those with an associate degree in 2023. This was, respectively, 15.0 and 16.8 months in 2022, according to the Higher Education Employment Indicators (TÜİK, 2024).

The ongoing economic crisis in Türkiye which has been briefly outlined above, is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a series of multiple social and political crises in the country that have been persisting for at least the last 10 years, marked by the 2013 Gezi Park protests. The atmosphere of multiple crises has also played an important role in prompting educated young adults to consider migration as a potential solution. The Gezi Park protests of June 2013 is regarded as one of the largest popular uprisings in the history of Turkish Republic. It started in İstanbul, Taksim with a particular demand of protection of an environment and urban public space and when supressed by the authorities with harsh manners including brutal police violence and excessive use of power transformed into a larger nationwide mass protests of expression of various other unfulfilled and repressed social demands by different social groups (Özen, 2015). These social demands related to grievances and frustrations about the AKP government's increasingly authoritarian style of governance and the decline of democracy in the country, which consisted of “a disdain for compromise, consensual politics and deliberation; a majoritarian understanding of democracy; a hierarchical and non-inclusive leadership; and a

growing appetite to regulate private lives" (Verney et al., 2020, p. 8). Notably, reactions to the AKP government's increasing Islamic-conservative policies—particularly those that restrict individual rights and freedoms by interfering with personal lifestyles, such as regulations on the consumption and marketing of alcoholic beverages and control measures concerning women's bodies, including childbirth, birth control, and abortion—accumulated over time and found expression in the Gezi Park protests (Özen, 2015).

The significance of the Gezi Park protests, and their aftermath social political environment was notable in the life course narratives of the research participants and their migration decisions; as the protesters faced violent reactions, the government became more authoritarian, and the voiced social demands stayed ignored and repressed by the authorities. The Gezi Park protests were İlayda's (F, 29) first response to my question about the factors that influenced her decision to migrate:

> This is actually something else. How can I say this—I've never really been much of an activist, but everyone has some opinion, good or bad, about the way their country is governed. Recently, I've started feeling a bit hopeless, like there's injustice, thinking, 'This doesn't seem right.' When I was in my last year at university, the Gezi protests broke out, we stayed in a tent for a week or so. That, for example, was a beautiful, unorganized movement, and it was truly great. I really wished it could have gone somewhere. But then we see things go wrong.

Another informant Okan (M, 30), who was very willing to participate in the research and share his personal experiences and observations about the brain drain showed me his pictures from the Gezi Park protests on this tablet. For him, the police violence against the demonstrators, which he himself witnessed, such an aggressive response to a basic demand as a democratic and constitutional right, as well as other developments in the country afterwards, were one of the main reasons for him to consider migration.

It is evident that the Gezi Park protests have not only disseminated perceptions of despair and grievances that may contribute to an inclination towards migration among the cohort, but they have also facilitated the perception of democratic participation and freedoms. The experience and appreciation of these values and their

perceived essentiality as fundamental principles of life have also seemingly influenced migration decisions. Caner (M, 32) discusses how his active involvement in the Gezi Park protests has shaped his perception and influenced his decision to pursue a life in a Western 'democratic' country where he believes he can realise these values:

> I was active in the Gezi protests, I participated. In fact, there was one time when I almost got caught by the police; a friend of mine was arrested and went to prison. We had some chaotic days like that. That's when I got my first taste of being politicized. Normally, I wasn't a political person, and I had never participated in protests—the only one I ever joined was Gezi. So, it left quite an impact on me. And it was really great, too. Taksim during Gezi felt like a liberated zone. We got a strong sense of freedom there—freedom of thought, modern life, and the idea of modern thinking dominating society really affected us. With all of this in mind, after graduation, the idea of finding a way to leave the country started to take shape.

Adnan (M, 36) also admits that he sees the Gezi Park protests as a turning point in his life, when he started thinking about moving abroad. This lengthy excerpt given below from his interview transcription illustrate the case for many others as it was discussed in the literature:

> I believe that the Gezi Park events were, for me, the moment of political detachment from Turkey. Prior to these protests, I had a generally positive view of the government and certain liberal ideologies. However, the Gezi protests dramatically shifted my perspective, and opened my eyes to realities I hadn't previously considered. Before then, I regarded the government as conservative but supportive of liberal rights, including equal opportunities and certain freedoms. It was during the protests that I realized this was not the case. Up until that point, despite my sexual identity—I am gay—I had not faced any significant difficulties, particularly living in Izmir, where my family was aware of my orientation and I led a relatively comfortable life, within limits. However, after the protests, I began to perceive an increasing pressure, particularly regarding activism. While I have never been professionally involved in activism, I was constantly engaged in research and reading about activist organizations and participated in events like Pride. In fact, the last Pride I attended was in 2013, which was the largest in İstanbul and Türkiye, with over 50,000 participants, including international attendees. Unfortunately, following that event, both police and government repression intensified.

Throughout the interview, he repeatedly emphasised that his decision to migrate was not motivated by economic considerations. Instead, he points to the political and

social conditions in the country, which he claims have worsened in the aftermath of the Gezi Park protests and subsequent events:

> The reason for my emigration wasn't primarily economic, to be honest. I was one of those people who was more concerned with Türkiye's issues. Wherever I went, I would compare the conditions of that country with those in Türkiye. And these weren't economic conditions, but rather social ones—like women's rights, LGBT rights. I constantly made these comparisons. It was the fact that we were increasingly moving away from European standards, from human rights standards, that had a significant impact on my decision… Honestly, we all want to live in a country where we see a future. From my perspective, I don't see a future in Türkiye. Even if I were to work in Türkiye with a great salary and in a great position, I still wouldn't consider going back to live there, because I simply don't see a future for myself.

These considerations of the participants that have especially spiked especially after 2013, Gezi Park protest support the research outcomes of Etling et al. (2020) which show the direct effect of political dissatisfaction on the migration intentions of young people in the Arab Mediterranean countries. The perception of democracy and rule of law plays an important role in determining migration intentions, especially when the political ideas and the political reality of the country of origin are in great difference. It is more of a case for the individuals when the laws as well as the hostile and stigmatizing attitudes from the regime do not enable them to express themselves freely and build a life accordingly. For example, in the case of Adnan, as a homosexual man, the increasing conservatism of the political and social landscape in Türkiye, and the subsequent restrictions it imposed on the lives of LGBT individuals, was a significant factor in his decision to migrate as he mentions that he is denied on equal civil rights on the basis of his sexual identity.

Following the year 2013 Gezi Park protests, the political crisis in Türkiye continued with violent events and terror attacks in 2015, the July 2016 coup attempt and subsequent two years state of emergency. Meanwhile, the government expanded its authority by circumventing parliamentary and opposition processes through the issuance of presidential decrees. Systematic attacks on media and civil society accompanied by mass purge of public servants from any opposition including teachers and academics. Türkiye has also been the scene of a serious increase in political violence and terrorism as a result of renewal Kurdish conflict and Türkiye's

involvement in the neighbouring Syrian civil war. A wave of deadly terrorist attacks was carried out between 2015-2017 in several cities of Türkiye, mainly claimed by PKK and ISIS (Reuters, 2023). In 2017, the parliamentary system changed and was replaced by an executive presidency with a constitutional referendum held in a context of violence and security concerns. This period in Turkey, characterised by the collapse of democracy (Ataç et al., 2017; Esen & Gümüşçü, 2017; Sayarı, 2016), directly and indirectly influenced the migration intentions of many young people. The narratives of participants presented below support the arguments of Sirkeci and Cohen (2016) on the profound impact of conflict and violence events on human mobility. According to Sirkeci and Cohen (2016), conflict situation at the home country when perceived as an environment of human insecurity encourages migration and increases the propensity of migration flows. The conflict may arise from extreme physical violence as well as may arise from lack of available jobs and employment pressure, community pressure due to identity issues, beliefs, ideas, gender inequality, family feuds, and discrimination. Their analysis show that the major migration flows in the history Türkiye have reflected the various wars and conflict situations.

Data analysis of the interview transcriptions reveals that the context of multiple crises that have dominated Türkiye over the past ten years, involving a multitude of conflicts and violent incidents, have heightened people's concerns over human security, thereby influencing their migration decisions. The quotations from numerous participants provided below illustrate the recurrence of the themes of "safety" and "security" in the course of the interviews, which were identified as pivotal elements in their migration narratives.

> It was a bad time. Everything started to go wrong. I saw a coup and a terrorist attack at the airport. Two weeks before I came here, the traffic police officer killed in the Izmir courthouse attack was someone I knew, as my father is also a retired traffic police officer. The explosion happened just two streets away from my house. I said to myself, 'It's time to go.' The motivation here isn't just money; it's also about living a peaceful life. That's why I came here. (Ali, M, 31)

> While I was on Erasmus, it was during a time when there were consecutive bombings in Türkiye, it must have been 2016. I remember seeing the peaceful

> environment in Poland—during six months, I probably saw the police just once. While in Krakow for New Year's, we woke up to news of an attack at Reina (nightclub in İstanbul) in Turkey. Several people died. A Polish woman hugged us when she found out we were from Türkiye, and we were confused, our phones were off, and we had no idea about anything… When I return and saw police with armoured vehicles and huge guns at the airport in Türkiye, I thought, 'Where have I come back to? What kind of environment was I in?' (Beril, F, 29)

In addition to the general climate of fear, insecurity, injustice and the lack of future prospects; violent events and terror attacks had a direct negative impact on the employment situations of some among the participants. Professional tour guides for example had severely affected by the political climate of Türkiye at the time, due to the frequent terror attacks that enabled them to do their jobs. Irmak (F, 32), a former tour guide in Türkiye, elucidates how the pervasive atmosphere of insecurity impacted her both personally and professionally, prompting her to pursue migration.

> I was constantly looking for a job abroad at that time. The reason was that there were a lot of security problems in Türkiye. 2015-2016 was a period of constant explosions, when I started my master's degree in Izmir, so I was actually very scared. I can say this is the first reason. Because I was working as a tourist guide, it affected my job very much in that period, in a negative sense, of course. There were not many tourists, so there was no business. Since there was a security problem, no one even wanted to go out on the streets.

The conflict situation prevailing in the country and the political unrest both domestically and internationally, has had a profound impact on some participants, disrupting their life trajectories and future plans, particularly in relation to employment. Okan (M, 30), a graduate of the Russian Literature department, was seeking employment with an airline company, having invested considerable effort in meeting the requisite entry standards. He was extremely disheartened to learn that the company had ceased all recruitment activities following Türkiye's involvement in the military conflict with Russia in northern Syria.

> I applied to an airline for a cabin crew position. They accepted me, I passed the exam, prepared for the interview, and even lost weight for it. I passed the interview, which had five stages. I entered with both Russian and English for the cabin role. I passed everything, and they congratulated me and said I'd be notified for the training group via email. But that week, political events struck

> again. It was like during Gezi, when I was at university—another period of questioning where things felt unstable. Just as I was trying to start my career, Türkiye shot down Russia's F-16, either in Iraq or Syria. Recruitment froze, and we didn't get responses for a long time. I waited eagerly, and after about a month, I received an email saying, 'Sorry, we're no longer hiring.' Another disappointment.

Beril (F, 29) aspired to pursue an academic career and continue her graduate studies at her university. However, she observed the dismissal of numerous professors for expressing criticism of the government, which caused her to become discouraged and alter her perspective on her academic aspirations.

> During that time, in academia, everything—our work, our relationships with professors, our future expectations—was impacted. All our professors who were preparing to be our references were dismissed by emergency decrees. My trust in academia was deeply shaken, and it broke my heart; we had to say goodbye to our professors one by one. They were part of the Academics for Peace. They encouraged us not to give up, and many of my friends decided to keep going in academia. But I felt I couldn't hold on. I tend to speak my mind, so I thought I might get involved in something and end up dismissed myself in a few years. Given the atmosphere at the time I worried that this government would never leave, that we'd have to live with this mindset our whole lives.

In addition to the physical violent events and political conflicts that are perceived as a direct threat to human security and wellbeing, the conflict environment that permeates many other aspects of daily life also exerts pressure on individuals, thereby influencing migration decisions. As evidenced by the testimonies of research participants, the political and social decline under the AKP's and Erdoğan's increasingly authoritarian rhetoric and policies that advance conservative ideology, religious values, and Islam, while simultaneously marginalising, disregarding, and even penalising secular groups, were perceived as a further form of threat. As Kaya (2015) clearly describes in his article, the subtle Islamisation of Turkish society and politics under the AKP rule increased the polarization in Türkiye "along the societal and political divides of secularism and Islamism" (p. 63). In his article Kaya (2015), provides an overview of the strategies, discourses and practices adopted by the neoliberal government in relation to the Islamisation of society and politics in Türkiye. These include: new alcohol regulations, the Islamisation of public spaces with neo-Ottoman aesthetics, the penetration of key institutions with their followers,

pressure on the critical media and its content, changes in the educational structure and the national curriculum, the popularisation of clerical schools (Imam Hatip), the segregation of mixed-sex student dormitories, the promotion of family and religious values, the image of women as mothers and caregivers, the restriction of abortion rights, and the replacement of social provisions with charity on the basis of Islamic references. As illustrated by Nazım's (M, 34) narrative, the restriction of individual freedoms and the corrupting politics are central to their view of migration when describing life in Athens:

> In Athens, go to Monastraki Square, Thissio Square and walk along a 2000-year-old road. You feel like you are walking down the same street as the philosophers. Nobody has built a shopping mall there, for example. It is nice that everything is still not monetised. It is still aesthetic. For example, if you hold hands with your lover, nothing will happen if you walk here. If you buy a beer and sit on the bench over there and drink it, no one will say, 'What's wrong, brother, you're drinking beer in broad daylight'. That freedom is worth a lot. When we first came here, we saw that there were a lot of people from Türkiye whose sexual preference was not heterosexual. And they feel comfortable expressing themselves here. They are not judged for it. Two men can hold hands, two women can hold hands. It is a very beautiful thing.

These changes in Turkish society and politics, which promote Islamic and conservative values and lifestyles, were mentioned in the interviews as a source of conflict that directly interferes with their everyday life. Interview data shows that the particular group of young and educated migrants embrace democratic values and personal freedoms and feel under threat with the current social and political environment in Türkiye. The following quotations illustrate the participants' discontent with regard to these issues. Gürkan (M, 30) grounds his migration motive as: "You know Türkiye and its problems. The pressure in Turkish society, the conservatism, social oppression, the neighbourhood pressure. There wasn't a specific reason for coming to Greece. I came simply to escape from Türkiye. I would have gone elsewhere too". When I asked him if it was because Greece is a European country, he simply replied: "It is far from Islam". Others like Murat, Mert and İzel also mention the social exclusion and pressure they experienced especially when not conforming the expected conservative values and norms dictated by the government in the last ten years.

> I couldn’t express myself there. I felt a pressure on me. The lifestyle, valuing people—when I go out, I shouldn’t have to be afraid. Even as a man, I feel scared walking the streets. There’s also a certain person I curse every day (he says with a laugh, referring to the president). I had no particular reason for choosing Greece. It was just to escape from the reasons I mentioned. (Murat, M, 29)

> My concerns were definitely about the economy, human rights, and freedom, especially freedom of thought. In Türkiye, I realized that I couldn’t fully be myself or feel at ease. Here, I feel more comfortable; people seem to care less about who you are, where you’re from, how you dress, or if you wear an earring. In Türkiye, I stopped wearing one—when I did, everyone would stare, especially on the bus. Here, there’s none of that. (Mert, M, 30)

> There’s also a significant impact of Türkiye’s political climate. If you think differently, if you’re in opposition, or if you don’t believe in or support what the majority believes, this confronts you everywhere—in school, in the family, and at work. You end up being labelled as an outcast, an unwanted person. I felt this pressure strongly in the workplace. As a woman, there's an additional struggle. From the way you dress to whether you laugh or speak freely, there's constant interference. All the things I mentioned are reasons in themselves. (İzel, F, 32)

Although none of the participants in the cluster I interviewed with have children, the direction of neoliberal and conservative social policies in Türkiye, particularly in the education sector, appears to be influential in migration decisions. Ece (F, 29), talks about the prospective difficulties of starting a family and raising children she thinks she would have in Türkiye:

> When I was a child, like many girls, I dreamed of getting married and having children. But I think—get married and have a child in this environment of Türkiye? I look at the schools, and the quality of education is terrible. If the nearest school is Imam Hatip (clerical school), then the child would have to go there because of the district system. Private schools are unaffordable; even preschools are costly, and good primary schools start around 40,000 lira. So, what am I supposed to do? Yes, I had a job and a decent salary, but it’s still not enough to provide a quality education for a child. It’s impossible. That's why I made this choice.

Zehra (F, 25) similarly shares her concerns over security and raising children in Türkiye based on her experiences of her sister and niece:

> No one trusts anyone anymore. This is genuinely sad, and when I think about it, I feel grateful that I came here. But I still feel sad about the situation in

> Türkiye. My family is there, my niece is there—she's only three years old, very sweet with long hair. Yet, I worry that, because of what happens to women, something terrible could happen to her one day. God forbid, someone could harm her or worse. You can't take your eyes off your child, constantly worrying someone might take them or something might happen. The environment has become unsafe in Türkiye.

Lastly, as one of the most crucial social problems in Türkiye, gender inequality and the violence against women has evidently strong impact on the migration decisions of both genders but especially the women. Numbers alarmingly show that between the five years period from 2018 to 2023, at least 1897 women were killed by men and 1126 women were found suspiciously death according to the data collected and published by an advocacy group *Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu* (We Will Stop Femicides Platform, 2024). Women advocacy groups argue that the system of impunity and inaction increases the number of femicides as they courage perpetrators. In a justifiable critique, Sahin (2022) asserts that the government's overt anti-feminist stance and male-biased political decisions impede efforts to combat women's exposure to various forms of violence and achieve gender equality. For instance, the withdrawal from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (İstanbul Convention) with a midnight decree announced by president Erdoğan in 2021 which is a legally binding international treaty that requires the state parties to combat gender-based violence through prevention, protection and punishment measures (Sahin, 2022, p. 218). Increasing numbers of violence incidents against women and the political landscape in Türkiye that is either ineffective or reluctant to take preventive measures are recognized and voiced by the participants as one of the important sources of their political discontent. Saniye (F, 37), expresses her frustration that the authorities have not taken any preventive measures in the regard of violent incidents especially against women:

> Every day we see the erosion of social trust. Some incidents we see, while others are hidden due to media bans. Many things are happening, like femicides—issues that could be addressed politically, and if no action is taken, they are indeed political. You can feel the aggression everywhere, in traffic. At any moment, you can see someone act out of anger and then try to excuse it as a "moment of weakness". We're all tired of sharing or memorializing the photo of another woman every day. But this doesn't end it.

She adds that she empathises with the victims and sees herself under the risk of violence in Türkiye: "Under these conditions, I find myself thinking, "I could have been on that same bus with that man"." Another female participant, Ece (F, 29), who had recently migrated to Greece just two months prior to the interview, revealed that she had recently been experiencing feelings of heightened insecurity in Türkiye, to the extent that she had been engaging in self-restraint to avoid any reactions in the event of potential abuse, behaviour which she did not wish to adopt in such circumstances:

> I just want to live with dignity, like everyone else. But looking around, I've noticed an increase in things like femicides in my country since last year, and these have started to bother me a lot lately. In the past, high school, for instance, if someone catcalled me, I would turn around, shout back, even confront them. But in the past 5-6 years, I've noticed a change in myself that I don't like. Now, if someone harasses me, I can't bring myself to respond because I worry—he might beat me up. He's a man, after all, with physical strength. He could corner me, break my bones, or even kill me. So, I've learned to hold myself back.

Violence against women is not merely a women's issue but a broader social problem that affects all segments of society, as revealed in the interviews. The topic was raised not only by female participants but also by male participants, particularly in discussions about the changing social structure of Türkiye, which they perceived as a driving force behind their migration. It was asserted by a significant proportion of the male participants that gender equality is of paramount importance. They expressed their contentment in living in a more egalitarian society, one in which they perceive women to be present in all aspects of life. They also expressed that this shift was personally liberating for them as well. When talking about their life after migration and living in Greece Burak (M, 44) and Okan (M, 30) gave similar examples on women's freedom:

> Here, a woman walks down the street at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning with a beer in her hand, without worrying about her clothes or anything else, and nobody bothers her, at least as far as I have seen and heard.

> You leave behind all the political problems of geography and culture. You feel at peace and prosper when you see that a woman can sit alone in the middle of the park at 2 in the morning.

Beyond this broader concern, the narratives of female participants revealed other constraining factors and motivators that stemmed from their lived experiences as women in the sending country context. These factors encompassed familial pressures, gender-based responsibilities and expectations, and the suppression their own autonomy as well as sexuality. Migration in this sense can also be considered as a form of liberation from these constraints. This was particularly the case for female participants from smaller cities in Türkiye where these values are more prevalent like Zehra (F, 25), Tuana (F, 31) and Beril (F, 29).

> When I was abroad for my Erasmus, I travelled to 11 or 12 countries. I even travelled to a few of them alone, and it was a wonderful experience. That was the only point in my life when I realized I had no limits. However, when I returned to Türkiye, everything started to feel deflated again. I found myself sitting at home, back with my family, but I no longer felt like myself. I was constantly dedicating my time to others but doing nothing for myself. I was living with my parents, I had no privacy and little time for myself, as I was constantly engaged with my family. Over time, I began to feel suffocated.
>
> While in Türkiye, I was not very self-aware; I had no hobbies and felt incapable of engaging in any meaningful activities. Additionally, as women, we rarely hear affirming phrases such as 'You look beautiful', 'That's amazing', or 'You did a great job.' However, when I arrived here and started receiving such compliments, I experienced a boost in my self-confidence. It made me feel that I was capable of achieving more, which encouraged me to gradually start exploring new hobbies.
>
> I have always felt alone, especially as a woman, I have never truly felt safe. Unfortunately, whenever I expressed myself fully, I found myself isolated. In Türkiye, one must deliberately seek out a specific group of like-minded people—those who share a similar perspective or, at the very least, have challenged certain societal taboos, such as gender norms or religious taboos related to life choices… About marriage, about sexuality, for the first time in my life I was able to talk openly with a partner about what I want, who I am and what my desires are.

These narratives from female participants support Elveren's (2018, p. 124) arguments that suggest the inadequate actions taken by public authorities to prevent violence against women, coupled with the government's pronounced emphasis on familism that perpetuates women's subordination in society, constitute pivotal factors that drive educated women's aspiration to migrate. His research on the return intentions of Turkish students and professionals living abroad clearly demonstrates

that political instability in Türkiye has become a dominant concern influencing migration and return decisions especially for women. He argues that women have higher migration and non-return tendencies because their lives are more seriously affected by the changing characteristics of political pressures towards Islamic authoritarianism.

5.3. Discourse of "Escaping" and Seeking Legality: Cautious Migration

Lastly, this chapter will address the issue of escape discourse, which has been observed to be prevalent among the participants in this research. This escape discourse is a common feature of the new wave of Turkish migration, in contrast to the major previous phases of emigration from Türkiye. For example, in the period of labour migration from Türkiye to European countries under the guest worker programmes of the early 1960s, the movement was initially seen as temporary, with the idea of an inevitable return, as it was largely a migration of single men with their families left behind. The primary objective was to engage in gainful employment in the large production sector as low-skilled or semi-skilled workers for a designated period, with the intention of accumulating savings through reduced expenditure (residing in dormitory-like accommodations or shared flats) and utilizing the currency advantage, and ultimately returning to Türkiye. With the prevalent understanding of "gurbet" which can be interpreted as a state of loneliness and homesickness, the time spend in abroad was generally considered as a period of suffering. This labour migration stream had started as legal and organised as a result of bilateral agreements between the states where the labour migrants were selected and assigned through the employment services bureaus opened in Türkiye (Abadan-Unat, 2011). Despite the fact that the circumstances have undergone modification in the ensuing decades, with numerous receiving countries electing to discontinue labour recruitment agreements, such as Germany in 1973, when it ceased to recruit labour, migration from Turkey to Western European countries persisted by alternative means. Such means include family reunification, marriage migration, seeking asylum, and irregular migration by way of extending tourist visas or working without the necessary documents (İçduygu, 2012; Martin, 1991).

However, regardless of the mode of entry either by following legal or irregular paths, the initial motivations labour migrants of 1960s onward was strikingly different from today's major migration streams, with the common perspective of initial return intention was a common perspective for the migrants in that period. In the current situation, return perspective is not that strong. Rather discourse around the motivation of escape is a dominating feature which is observed throughout the interviews. Arda (M, 29) states that his search was broad in scope and lacked a specific destination or sector. He was driven primarily by a desire to relocate. When I inquired about how he learned about the job opportunity in Athens, he replied:

> I had started researching on my own—thinking about what I could do, looking into options like a regular job, language school, or even Work and Travel programs. I was open to anything. I just wanted to leave, no matter what. Even if it meant cleaning toilets, I was determined to go. Language school was an option for example, at that time, the Euro and Dollar exchange rates were more affordable. For Work and Travel my plan was to follow the path of a friend who had gone there, maybe find a way to stay, get a job, extend my stay as much as possible, learn the language, perhaps even obtain citizenship. This wasn't a small search for adventure—it was a serious attempt to sever my ties, a way to leave for good, even if it meant tearing up my passport.

When the motivation for migration is not solely economic, but also encompasses the disruption caused by the individual's displacement from their social and political environment in the country of origin, the intention to return is found to be less prevalent. This situation is clearly reflected in the interviews. Gürkan (M, 30) articulates his non-return intentions even in the context of economic recovery in Türkiye. Like many others, he also opts for the term 'escape' when elaborating on his decision:

> Even if Türkiye were to recover financially in 15 years, I don't believe we could shake off this social pressure and conservative mindset for another 60-70 years. So, my reason for escaping wasn't just financial. That's why, even if the economy improves, I wouldn't return.

In light of the evidence presented in this chapter, it can be argued that educated migrants from Türkiye are seeking escape due to the prevailing conditions and motivations. Nevertheless, regardless of the connotations attached to the term

‘escape’, it is not the informality that they are seeking. The cluster of individuals under consideration in this research possess specific educational qualifications and foreign language abilities. They sought to identify avenues for legal migration to Europe within the prevailing circumstances as Turkish citizens. Ultimately, they entered Europe through formal contractual labour opportunities in Greece. Participants even explain that they did not attempt any irregular ways of migration event though they had urge to escape. A participant Adnan (M, 36) revealed that he had initially contemplated emigration to the UK with a tourist visa. However, he subsequently reconsidered this option due to the prevailing uncertainty as he says:

> When I started thinking about moving abroad, I first considered the UK because two of my close friends were already living there. I applied for a visa, but going to the UK was uncertain because I would only be there as a tourist with vague plans of figuring things out afterwards. That's why the opportunity to work legally in Greece was significant. Otherwise, going somewhere as a tourist and staying illegally wasn’t an option for me. I have an education and certain standards, and I didn’t want to work under such conditions.

Another participant, Beril (F, 29), explains that she was only looking for legal migration routes. She recalls a story in which she jokingly refused a friend's offer to engage in any illegal activities to help her relocate:

> To be able to work abroad, the company needs to sponsor you, and cover your residence permit. Many countries required sponsorship. At that time of my job search, a friend from Erasmus, from Poland even suggested, 'Come, let’s make a civil marriage so you can work here.' I said, 'No, I’m not that desperate yet; let me look around a bit more first.'.

The prevalent discourse among the new migrants concerning escape coincides with a desire and a higher preference for legality, which is reflected in the participants’ narratives in that Greece was an unintended and coincidental destination for them. Not only Greece in a vague term, the capital city Athens and call centre job located there recruiting and providing visa sponsorship became an intersect point for a cautious migration for who desire an escape and legality at the same time.

What makes this migration cautious? First of all, it is facilitated by a formal employment contract that minimises the risk taken for migration which also promises

European labour standards and rights. It also satisfies the desire for escape and offers a life in European capital with international work environment. Secondly, the geographical and cultural proximity between Türkiye and Greece renders this migration a safe decision for this cohort. Greece is one of eight neighbouring countries that shares a border with Türkiye. It is located in the northwest of Türkiye, with a land border of 200 kilometres that largely follows the Evros River. Additionally, it has a sea border in the southwest and west of Türkiye, with the Greek islands situated in the Mediterranean and Aegean seas. In addition to the physical distance, which allows research participants to sustain constant ties with their home with ease, the similar climate and cultural affinity that dates back centuries of shared history of coexistence and a Mediterranean lifestyle where migrants from Türkiye feel less of a stranger in the host society diminish the potential challenges associated with migration. On that ground, Greece can easily be seen as one of the closest doors to the EU for Turkish citizens. A participant (Burak, M, 44) who already had migration intentions and was looking for a way out explains how he assessed this opportunity in Greece. In his narrative, it becomes evident that he regarded Athens, Greece as a reasonably appealing destination for migration, as he says:

> I had never considered Greece. Even though my English is only intermediate, I was looking for work in an English-speaking country, like the U.S., the U.K., Canada, or Malta. Finding a job in Greece wasn't something on my mind; I learned about it through a friend… The reason I chose Greece was primarily, of course, that I found a job here. But you don't accept every job offer that comes your way. Why did I say yes to Greece? First, we're very close. It's a neighbouring country, so I thought I could visit my family more easily. We're in the same time zone, so coordinating calls and visits is straightforward. We share a similar geography. Of course, there are cultural differences, but I don't even think of it as a sea separating us; it's like two banks of the same river. We've lived together for many years, intertwined. I've been here for four years and haven't experienced any racism. The fact that I'd be working in Turkish also influenced my decision.

This chapter provides an illustration of the main characteristics of the research participants who have selected a specific route as a strategy for departing from Türkiye. An analysis of the demographics reveals that the primary agents of this mobility are single young adults who have received a higher education and possess proficiency in English.

The findings of this study indicate that previous overseas experience exerts a significant influence on the further migration decisions of young adults from Türkiye. The time spent abroad, typically in Europe, is often conducive to the development of a distinct lifestyle and a set of values. Secondly, this chapter elucidates the barriers encountered or contemplated by these individuals in the Turkish labour market, which have the potential to impede their potential and limit their chances of achieving better life conditions. Notwithstanding the economic crisis experienced by Turkey, the chapter under discussion also posits the importance of political and social unrest in determining the decision of the participants to migrate, and the prevailing discourse on escape in defining the migration movement.

CHAPTER 6

IMMOBILITY, VISA REGIMES AND BOUNDED LABOUR

This chapter aims to examine the impact of law and legal frameworks on migration patterns and migrants' everyday realities by focusing on the present case of new migrants in Greece. Specifically, this chapter addresses the effects of citizenship and the corresponding visa regimes, migration policies, institutional arrangements, and the scope of mobility and/or immobility they offer on shaping migration realities. In turn, this chapter considers the impact of these factors on three key areas: a) migration aspirations, b) the new migration routes and destinations enabled by this, as well as c) the immediate and indirect consequences on the everyday realities of migrants following their act of migration, with a particular focus on the issues of work and residence. As holders of non-EU passports with limited, restricted and selected mobility rights, the experiences of Turkish citizens employed as call-centre workers in Athens, Greece – the unique case study presented in this research – are instrumental in analysing the aforementioned inquiry. In addition to the impacts of structural factors on migration and immigration conditions, this chapter also considers the individual strategies employed by this group of migrants to cope with their ambiguous positionings in the migration context and the labour market, without neglecting the role of human agency.

In light of the fact that this chapter is specifically concerned with the structural factors that exert an influence on cross-border migration, particularly in relation to migration policies that are designed to control and regulate, and the role of citizenship in either facilitating or impeding mobility, it is essential to provide an overview of the relevant literature and the key debates that surround these issues and concepts. It can be reasonably argued that researchers generally concur that states and their migration policies have a pronounced influence on migration patterns. This

is due to the fact that such policies can take a variety of legally binding forms, including border controls and recruitment programmes, which determine who is permitted to enter and who is not (Carling, 2002; Castles, 2006; Czaika and de Haas, 2017; de Haas, 2021; Kiwan, 2010; Kivisto and Faist, 2010; Piper and Withers, 2018). Even the critics of methodological nationalism – a common tendency in migration studies to consider nation-states as the main unit of analysis and only container of society- acknowledge the role of states among the other actors for regulating and legitimising movements by denying emigration and immigration of some while promoting the movement of others at the same time (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013). They urge the scholars to "examine the role of nation-states and the influence of national identities in shaping the experience of migrants without confining their study and analysis within the parameters of the nation-state" (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013, p. 192).

Migration movements from Türkiye to Greece, to an EU member state, are subject to the regulations of each nation-state in accordance with the relevant legislation. However, it should be noted that the country of destination in this case study is part of a broader supranational entity, namely the European Union. The legal status of citizenship exists at multiple levels, including the nation-state, subnational regions, and the supranational level. This multifaceted nature of citizenship affects migration movements and the experience of migrants at each of these levels. For example, the European Union and its member states are subject to supranational regulations. As Kivisto and Faist (2010, p. 226) observe "being a member of the European Union has a number of implications, including the freedom of mobility of EU citizens and their access to jobs within the organization's 27 member states". The European Union's common framework for immigration policies, which grants certain rights to the citizens of its members, creates a significant distinction between EU nationals and non-EU nationals with regard to free movement, employment and residency throughout the European Union (Kivisto and Faist, 2010, p. 66). The experiences of immigrants of EU nationals and non-EU nationals may show a total contrast or at least a considerable amount of variety based on their citizenship status and the levels at which they operate. This is due to the fact that they face different regulations and barriers or opportunities before, during and after the act of migration.

6.1. Migration Aspirations

The role of visa regimes and restricted migration policies is of great consequence, as their influence is evident at an earlier stage than the act of migration for a significant proportion of migrants. The feeling of immobility that results from the possession of citizenship, in addition to the residence and visa regimes to which they are subjected, gives rise to an aspiration for migration at its outset. This represents a preliminary step towards the goal of securing more flexible mobility opportunities in the future. In their seminal work, Carling (2002) posited the concept of "involuntary immobility" to describe individuals who aspire to migrate but are constrained by restrictive migration policies or a lack of resources. The condition of limited mobility itself gives rise to feelings of deprivation and an urge to migrate in order to achieve the potential for freedom of movement. As De Haas (2021) states, the context becomes much more apparent: "Border walls or other migration restrictions may, in fact, serve to intensify the desire to reach the other side, creating an obsession with 'getting out'." (p. 19).

In addition, Carling's (2002) research highlights the significance of the social connotations associated with migration in the formation of migration aspirations, which are situated within specific societal contexts shaped by historical and cultural factors. This common perspective on migration within a society is largely shared by its members is referred to as the 'emigration environment' in Carling's study (2002). This environment is argued to be influential in individuals' decisions. Furthermore, he posits that the imposition of additional restrictions on the migration regime results in a greater number of people aspiring to migrate, yet being unable to do so. Increasing barriers to international migration eventually creates different hierarchies as in the Carling's (2002, p. 38) case in which "the unskilled young people of Cape Verde find themselves in the lower strata" in the hierarchy of ease of movement.

Likewise, the findings of Ferro's (2006) study lend support the influence of societal pressure and socially constructed image of migrant on migratory aspirations among knowledge workers in Romania where mobility opportunities are restricted. In the contemporary context of labour mobility, qualified workers are more in demand with

the advent of globalisation and knowledge economy, and so migration legislations select and favour skilled workers. In this context, the status of a migrant worker is elevated, as only those who have demonstrated success are able to become migrants under these circumstances. As observed by Ferro in 2006, the practice of working abroad is already a well-established expectation regarding Information Technology professionals in Romania. This phenomenon simultaneously demonstrates the perceived value attached to these individuals, as evidenced by the assumption that the most highly regarded IT professionals are those who are recruited by international markets (Ferro, 2006, p. 182). Consequently, working abroad for highly skilled individuals is tantamount to achieving success, which confers status and pride upon migrants as well as their families who remain in their country of origin.

The desire to migrate is a consequence of the existence of restrictive migration policies, the socialisation of individuals to become migrants in order to achieve success, and the expectation of mobility opportunities and rights for non-EU citizens abroad. At the time the research was conducted and published, Romania was not yet an EU member state. The interviews conducted by Ferro for her research demonstrate the significance of mobility opportunities anticipated in the event of migration and the acquisition of citizenship in the country of destination. These opportunities are perceived as a source of aspiration by IT workers in Romania, who indicate that they can travel freely, relocate to other European countries, and pursue employment in any field in whichever country they choose, without encountering any restrictions (Ferro, 2006, p. 186). Therefore, the idea of migration as a life project has started to evolve in the early years of higher education as a part of socialization process, which is especially relevant to the highly skilled.

The data obtained in my own research from in-depth interviews with the new migrants in Greece on the subject of migration decision-making can be found to be consistent with the aforementioned arguments, thereby providing insight into the functioning of migration culture among educated young adults in Türkiye. For instance, Caner (M, 32) who has graduated from one of the most reputable universities explains his mindset towards Europe and European lifestyle:

> After graduation, my mindset was about to find a way to migrate. I was thinking if I could find an opportunity, I would like to go to Europe and try myself there. Besides, the education we received was directing us towards the Western world; Europe and America. After all we have been studying everything in English, all our classes and exams were in English.

Another informant Okan (M, 30) describes the conditions of migration culture among his peers, especially friends and acquaintances from university circles:

> It is partly the influence of my social environment. It annoyed me when I saw couple of my friends from university have migrated. But anyway, apart from this it was always in my mind, I studied foreign language on that basis. I was constantly preparing myself for it. When the conditions became favourable, when I found the opportunity after university, I could say that I jumped in.

In this regard, migration is predominantly perceived as a success rather than a failure by society at large and by migrants themselves. This is largely due to the fact that the majority of migrants from Türkiye nowadays are highly skilled professionals who are able to navigate the existing migration policies of destination countries. This creates an additional pressure on those who have recently completed their studies to demonstrate their value through the act of migration, which in turn increases their aspirations. Furthermore, a culture that is favourable towards and values migration and migrants may also encourage the acceptance of unexpected opportunities abroad.

Additionally, the anticipation of more rigorous visa regulations and migration control in the near future (Czaika & de Haas, 2017) is also a contributing factor to the aspiration of migration. When young people perceive that their mobility opportunities would be more limited and constrained in the light of the prevailing political climate in their countries of origin and destination, they begin to contemplate migration as a means of safeguarding their freedom of movement. This also has a positive effect on the decision to migrate when an opportunity arises, before it is too late, thus avoiding any potential regret in the event of a more restrictive mobility regime in the future. This concept, described by Czaika and de Haas (2017, p. 915) as ‘now or never’ considerations, is particularly pertinent in the context of migration. The ‘now or never’ considerations are evident in the interviews, with participants expressing hesitation in declining the job offer in

Athens call centres and a desire to seize the opportunity when it arises. Burak (M, 44) simply says how he perceived the opportunity considering the limited international mobility chances for the Turkish citizens "I didn't want to miss this opportunity because I couldn't know when such a chance might come my way again". Another participant Arda (M, 29) indicates that he even droped out from his university in İstanbul, because of the legal migration opportunity to Europe he came up. He says:

> After my Erasmus experience, I returned to Türkiye to complete half a semester at my university, as I still needed credits. I came back around March or April and had to finish that term. Following my time abroad, I told myself, 'I absolutely need to do something.' Without waiting to graduate, I started looking into opportunities like jobs abroad, language schools, and similar options. I came across a technology job in Greece, applied, and suddenly got a response. I still had half a semester left to graduate, but I thought, 'Never mind,' and accepted the job offer, so I came here. Looking back, I could have finished school first and then gone, but at the time, with my enthusiasm running high, I thought, 'They want me now, so I should go immediately.'

Similarly to Arda's experience, Okan (M, 30) promptly resigned from his full-time position in Türkiye and relocated to Athens shortly after being informed of his successful online application. Okan was made aware of this employment opportunity by a former university colleague, and thus elected to submit his candidacy in reliance on said colleague's willingness to serve as a professional reference. In the course of my interview with Okan, it became evident that the fear of missing an opportunity to live abroad is a common sentiment among the research participants when contemplating the job offer from the call centre:

> I messaged my friend and said I could come. I either applied then, or maybe they recommended me, and the process started. They told me, 'If you're coming, come within a week; if not, we won't hire you.' Recruiters here are a bit like that; they enjoy creating pressure and instilling fear in situations like this. We later learned that they've been using the same lie for years. But when you're filled with the excitement of going abroad, you think, 'It's now or never; if I don't do it, it's over.' Within a week, I went straight to the company and told the regional manager who hired me, 'I'm resigning. I'm going abroad; I got a job, and I'm leaving in a week.' They said, 'We'll give you a car, change your position, move you to finance or administrative roles—just don't leave us.' I replied, 'I'm not bluffing; I'm really going abroad.' We came to an understanding, and they said, 'Go ahead, you're

> young, and the door will always be open for you here.' Within that week, I sorted out my paperwork, said goodbye to my family, and headed to Athens.

The notion of 'now or never' is a powerful motivator for migration, particularly in the context of restrictive visa regimes and perceived degradation in the country of origin. While economic and professional considerations are a significant factor, they are not the sole driving force behind these movements. As evidenced by the above examples, individuals may choose to seize a sudden opportunity over pursuing ongoing education or employment in Türkiye. Visa restrictions constraining the freedom of international mobility for the Turkish nationals stimulate the initial migration aspirations as the informants' accounts point out. Migration is therefore seen as an emancipation from the immobility status. Ece (F, 29), explained her original thoughts about migration actually root in the urge for travelling freely and see the world easily. In her own words:

> First of all, visiting abroad was always effective. There was the issue of not being able to get a visa and this makes abroad even more attractive. I was like; my God, I can't go, how can I not go there? That was the beginning… Yes, my future is here, because as I said in the beginning, I want to visit the islands here, I want to spend my 15 days of annual leave in Italy. I want to have the freedom to do these things. I may stay at home for 15 days, but I like the ability to buy a plane ticket and go there, it's that simple. Because I have the freedom to do so. It's not about money, I mean, it's something else.

These idealisations about mobility opportunities would be provided after migration to an EU country have actually broader meanings for the informants which also includes the traveling purposes as the example above reveals. Easier and cheaper trips to European cities are seen as one of the most influential sources of aspirations to migrate. Under the current visa regime, it is quite toilsome for the Turkish citizens residing in Türkiye to access mobility across Europe even for short term touristic purposes. It requires a considerable amount of time and finance just to apply for visa and yet it is still unsure whether to obtain it or not. The risk of losing time, effort, and non-refundable money since it is expected from applicants to prepay for tickets, accommodation, insurance plus the application fee is considered as a huge barrier against their free mobility which also hinders their desires to be a mobile member of the global world. Therefore, to cope with this experienced immobility in the country

of origin as non-EU citizens, migration to any EU country seems like a practical option to secure future mobility chances.

6.2. New Migration Routes

In this section I would like to examine the extent and the way of the impact of structural barriers such as the laws, visa regimes, migration policies, citizenship etc. as discussed above on the creation of alternative migration routes and destinations for the new migrants. Firstly, an examination of the regulations in question will be undertaken, with a view to establishing how they function to restrict entries to certain locations. This will entail an investigation of the ways in which specific groups are excluded from entering based on their class, gender, race, citizenship and legal status. Secondly, the same examination will be conducted with a view to establishing how the regulations enable and foster migration into other directions.

The academic literature on restrictive migration policies underscores the significant limiting impact of state-level visa and border control policies. Malmberg (2020), for instance, adopts a geographic perspective and identifies national borders and other non-physical barriers as among the most pivotal factors shaping contemporary international migration. The construction of political barriers and the categorisation of people and spaces according to their origins and destinations have arguably constrained migration, particularly in the south-to-north direction. It is posited that shifts in economic, political and social conditions in the countries of origin and destination at different points in time exert an influence on migration decisions and destinations. This can encompass changes in migration policies and economic restructuring, along with their ramifications in the sending and receiving contexts. Hägerstrand (cited in Malmberg, 2020, p. 79) uses the term steering constraints for explaining the directing role of rules and laws such as immigration policies which are “created with the intention of limiting or giving increased access to time-space”. Similarly, Crawley and Hagen-Zanker (2019) highlight the role of migration controls in impeding the entry of some individuals into their desired destinations.

Similar sentiments are reflected in my analysis of interview data, wherein holders of non-EU passports revealed that they were unable to migrate to their initially

preferred destinations due to the constraints imposed by visa regulations. The accounts of interviewees demonstrate that not holding EU citizenship or a right to reside and work within the EU constituted a significant obstacle in their job search. The majority of job vacancies encountered online in Europe included these criteria regarding the applicants' citizenship and work permit as a prerequisite. Furthermore, it was often explicitly stated in the advertisement that the company was not offering any sponsorship for immigration procedures.

Consequently, many potential immigrants failed to meet the legal criteria stated in the job posting, despite being perfectly qualified to fill the position. In some instances, even an offer of employment proved ineffective in surmounting the political obstacles pertaining to visas and residence permits, as illustrated by the case of Gamze (F, 30):

> I started my job search with Germany, I thought it would be easier, but turned out it wasn't. I was considering other places first like Germany, Poland, Italy. But there is a reality; if you are not a European citizen, if you have not graduated from a reputable/valid university, it is like you have not studied at all. And, you don't have the paper (residence permit) in your hand, you don't have specific skills like a doctor or a hairdresser, most places don't accept you for this reason. I applied many places. They only said "Okay you know English good, you have graduated from university, you have an English diploma good, but do you hold the card? Can you legally live in here? If no, we cannot provide that. If you will move here someday, we would like to work with you" they said.

In their 2019 study, Hein de Hass and colleagues examine the substitution effects of restrictive migration policies as unintended consequences in the field of migration research. One of the most notable substitution effects identified is that of spatial substitution. The term describes the migration patterns that shift in response to restrictive migration policies. In these instances, migrants may seek alternative destinations with more favourable legal access and regulations. This shift in destination preferences, or the so-called 'spatial substitution effect', demonstrates that when individuals aspire to migrate but are constrained by restrictive regulations, instead of abandoning the idea of migration entirely, they are more likely to seek alternative options where they can achieve their migration aspirations. These findings serve to illustrate the inherently dynamic nature of the migration process,

whereby it responds to changing conditions and evolves accordingly. As evidenced by the case of Gamze, the destination preferences of migrants are shaped by the constraints they face and the alternative opportunities available to them. It is, however, important to note that the shift in destination preferences is still contingent upon the 'delimitation of geographic areas', such as the EU or the Schengen area, based on people's mental maps. These maps comprise constructed images, ideas and attitudes of individuals about certain places (Malmberg, 2020, p. 76).

In contrast with the limiting effect of migration policies and visa regimes, there is also evidence to suggest that these systems can facilitate mobility. It is a well-established phenomenon that migration is driven by recruitment agreements and regulations, which in turn give rise to further flows and migration corridors in a directional pattern similar to that observed in guestworker schemes. Castles et al. (2014, p. 241) argue that the special types of labour demand in the receiving countries which can be mostly met by migrant workers has been responded by the government policies that allow the legal entry of foreign labour by creating special recruitment and management systems. The narratives of informants indicate that their destination preference i.e. their migration to Greece has been largely shaped by the recruitment programme of a company that specifically requires migrants to possess language skills and that provides exceptional responsiveness in terms of migration policy, offering straightforward access to visas and resident rights for this particular group of labour migrants.

The phenomenon of contracted migration, which encompasses the securing of a job prior to relocation, serves to mitigate the anxieties and uncertainties that are commonly associated with the migration process. This, in turn, exerts a significant influence on the decision to migrate, as well as the direction in which migrants choose to relocate (Fischer et al., 2020, p. 103). When individuals are aware that their personal qualifications are in demand in a specific location, they are more likely to migrate in that direction, particularly when they have networks, including friends and acquaintances who reside there, providing them with information about the quality of life and the conditions in that place. Consequently, the implementation of an ongoing recruitment programme by a company, coupled with the introduction of

streamlined entry procedures, serves to cultivate networks and ultimately propel migration flows towards a specific destination.

Based on my interviews, I argue that in the light of the current visa regulations and mobility regimes, which exclude and/or favour individuals based on certain criteria, including citizenship, prospective migrants who are aspired but lack the necessary conditions to do so may opt to shift their destinations or routes to alternative places where their mobility is possible and welcomed. In the case of Turkish citizens, Athens, Greece, has emerged as a viable option for migration due to the exceptional flexibility of the institutional arrangements in place regarding restrictive visa regulations based on specific labour demand. Spatial substitution effect of the restrictive visa and migration policies is functioning in this case, based on the migrants' mental maps in which Greece is considered within the boundaries of the imagined and desired migration destination geographically (West, Europe), politically (European Union), and socially (lifestyle concerns, freedom). Therefore, the above-mentioned recruitment programme and the associated visa adjustments provide a legal gateway for aspiring migrants and initiate the migration process and mobility only in a limited and defined area.

By analysing the data obtained from the interviews, it becomes evident that the visa regimes, regulations and special arrangements play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of migration. This is particularly evident in the case of young and educated migrants from Türkiye in Greece, which was not initially perceived as a preferred destination for migration by the majority of informants. Nevertheless, the prevailing circumstances that restrict their capacity for relocation to alternative locations and the existence of employment opportunities that facilitate the acquisition of residence permits have rendered Greece a country of destination. As evidenced by the quotations below, informants articulate the circumstances that led to their decision to relocate to Greece, portraying it as a fortuitous destination, a means of escape, and a stepping stone that provides easy and less costly exit:

> Why Greece? The only opportunity I have come across, it's as simple as that. The same job is also available in Portugal and Ireland, but in those countries

> the companies don’t provide you work permit and residence card. You have to arrange it yourself. (Selim, M, 35)

> I was overwhelmed in my last job in Türkiye. I just wanted to move wherever I could, to be honest. And I said why not to Greece. I mean, after all, I will live in a different city, in a different country, I will discover the culture, the different things there. This is the fastest and easiest country in the region to issue a residence permit. That's why it's easier to come here. (İzel, F, 32)

The data presented in the interviews provides further evidence that, in addition to migration policies and visa regimes, the particular legal role of employment (Könönen, 2019) for migrants plays an instrumental part in determining the circumstances and possibilities surrounding the migration process from its inception, serving as a provider of residence permits in relation to immigration regulations.

6.3. Conditions of Immobility and Bounded Labour

This section presents the conditions of immobility that migrants experience as a consequence of the specific migration policies and regulations to which they are subjected as Turkish citizens. It begins by discussing the concept of immobility in the context of migration studies. Salazar (2021) addresses the problematic nature of equating immobility with the absence of migration. He argues that not all migrants, who are labelled as such, are necessarily mobile, and that not all mobile people are equally likely to be labelled as migrants. There are numerous empirical cases in which migrants, presumed to be inherently mobile, are confronted with diverse manifestations of immobility. It is therefore evident that the subject of immobility represents a significant area of interest within the field of migration studies. It is erroneous to view mobility and immobility as two separate and distinct entities. Rather, they are inherently entwined and mutually reinforcing, forming a complex and dynamic relationship that cannot be reduced to a simple dichotomy. People may experience both immobility and mobility simultaneously, to varying degrees and forms, as Salazar (2021, p. 15) asserts:

> Just as nobody is completely mobile, no one is entirely immobile, especially if we consider different scales of movement, or extend our analysis to imaginaries of (im)mobility. People’s mobility at one scale can coexist with

> their immobility at another. People also shift between mobilities and immobilities, with one following the other or with the two interacting with each other in different combinations.

Furthermore, the perception of immobility as a positive or negative phenomenon, as well as its desirability, is contingent upon the context and the individual's position within the social, economic, and political order. It is a dynamic process that is subject to constant renegotiation and reinterpretation. It is therefore crucial for migration scholars to recognise that immobility is a relational concept and that associating it with a form of disadvantage is a misrepresentation. The capacity to exercise freedom and autonomy is not contingent on physical movement; rather, it is the ability to make decisions independently that matters.

Following the insights shared above, the concept of immobility is to be tackled in the same manner in the analysis of the interview data as dynamic in nature and something experienced relationally. I would like to shed light on the mechanisms behind the experiences and feelings of immobility lived/shared by migrants in their destination who are assumed to be mobile. They can be considered mobile in one scale, for example between two nation states: Türkiye and Greece. However, within this transnational mobility they are taking part in, they are also experiencing immobility in different forms and scales mainly due to visa policies and regulations they are subjected to as non-European citizens. As it was explained in the previous part, their migration was facilitated by the exceptional visa regulations which are implemented as a response to the specific foreign labour demand which applies with its specific rules and conditions.

Nevertheless, the exceptional visa regulations that permit non-European nationals to reside and work in Greece may only offer limited mobility to migrants, as they encounter immobility at multiple levels. Consequently, the conditional agreement has resulted in two principal aspects of immobility for migrants from Türkiye in Greece. The first one is regarding physical and geographical intra-EU mobility. The interviewees asserted that, despite being legally employed and residing in an EU country, they are prohibited from relocating to another EU country under the terms of their work permit. Consequently, the free movement principle of the EU is

inapplicable to third-country nationals (TCNs), resulting in a state of immobility for the participants. The migrants in this case study have achieved a significant degree of mobility, having relocated from Türkiye to Greece and gained entry to the European context. However, their mobility is also partial, reflecting the constraints and limitations they face in their journey. Cerna (2013) maintains that the relative unfreedom of labour migrants from non-EU countries, as exemplified by the case in question, can be attributed to the diversity of member states' transposition of the EU directives into their national legislation. Member states are empowered to select immigrants based on their own needs and interests and to establish conditions for the free movement of TCNs, despite the EU's intentions for a common policy at the supranational level. The labour demand of the transnational company operating in Greece and their recruitment scheme, which sponsors TCNs' mobility opportunities through a conditional visa, provide a tangible illustration of the practical implications of visa regimes and migration policies, resulting in the experienced physical and geographical immobility of migrants.

The second aspect of immobility that migrants from Türkiye in Greece experience is in regard to their labour market mobility. The sponsorship scheme utilized by the migrants in question has been observed to have been formulated by state and non-state actors, thereby enabling TCNs to relocate and engage in employment in Greece in response to the multinational company's demand for labour power with multiple language skills. The issued residence and work permits are however only valid for as long as the migrants from outside Europe continue to work in the same professional specialization or specific employer for which they were initially hired, in accordance with the information provided on the website of the EU Immigration Portal of the European Commission (n.d.). This condition results in a lack of mobility in the labour market for migrants, as it restricts the professional sector in which they are permitted to work. Consequently, they are unable to change their occupation and apply for positions that are outside of their current field. In addition to that, the occupational mobility of migrants within the same sector is also severely constrained. This is due to the fact that the multinational call centre company where migrants are employed is the leading global company in Greece operating in this

specific sector. This effectively constitutes a de facto monopoly, leaving migrants with very few options.

It can therefore be reasonably asserted that the specific visa regulations for TCNs in Greece effectively bind them to their employer and particular job. The system and regulations that TCN migrants are exposed to in Greece bear resemblance to the experiences of highly skilled migrants in Qatar due to the employer sponsorship system, referred to as Kafala in the region. This system entails that the migrant's visa status is contingent upon their continued employment with their sponsoring entity (Babar et al., 2019, p. 1557). The authors of the given research also differentiate the mobility and immobility experiences of the Arab and Western highly skilled migrants based on nationality, power of passport and conditions in the home country which challenges the assumption that considers highly skilled migrants as hyper-mobile driven by choice, globalized and unified group. The Kafala system in Qatar affects both Arab and Western migrants, as it severely restricts their spatial and occupational mobility. However, Arab migrants face additional challenges that render them more vulnerable to immobility, insecurity and exploitation. In comparison to their Western counterparts, they typically intend to reside in the host country for longer periods of time due to the prevailing conflicts, instability and security concerns in their country of origin. However, these intentions are in direct opposition to the restrictive labour legislation and migration policies that are in place in Qatar, which are of a temporary nature and serve to exacerbate the conditions of immobility.

It is notable that strikingly comparable immobility patterns have been documented in Athens, particularly between disparate groups of call centre worker migrants. In order to sustain their attained mobility within Greece, TCNs, including Turkish citizens, are compelled to contend with the conditions stipulated by their sponsor employer, as they are precluded from pursuing alternative occupations. The combination of occupational immobility and limited spatial mobility in the migration process creates a situation of bounded labour for those seeking to secure their mobility, that is to say, their right to live in Greece as migrants. In essence, those who have secured mobility, specifically the right to work and reside in Greece under

exceptional visa regulations, may retain these privileges as long as they remain employed by the same company.

In examining the constrained mobility prospects of the TCNs and the factors that drive migration, which are themselves influenced initially by limited mobility, it becomes evident that the condition of bounded labour at the company exerts additional stress on the migrants' lives. They have been experiencing elevated levels of insecurity due to their inability to exercise complete control over their lives in Greece, despite the fact that the company exercises control over them. They are aware that in the event of losing their position at the sponsoring company, they will also lose their mobility rights and be compelled to abandon their current way of life, as they would then be required to return to Türkiye. As a result, they find themselves in a state of temporality and uncertainty, when the conditions make long-term settlement and future planning almost impossible. The prevalence of short-term employment contracts in the contemporary labour market has been identified as a significant contributing factor to elevated stress and insecurity levels among migrants. In the course of the interviews, numerous participants voiced concerns and anxieties pertaining to the prevalence of short-term contracts in relation to their lives in Greece.

> Our main issue here is anxiety, related to contracts. I mean, what will happen when a 2-month, 3-month, or 5-month contract ends? Will it be renewed? Will they let me go? Getting slightly longer-term or permanent contracts is quite difficult; they're not offered often. The only time I had a 6-month contract was when I first started in the technical department. Other than that, I was only offered 2- or 3-month contracts. It's very short, and it makes it impossible for people to plan or think long-term. (Asya, F, 27)

> For us, contracts are sometimes 3 months, 6 months, or 1 year long. They're never longer than a year, unless you're lucky enough to have an unlimited contract. In general, though, everything operates on short-term contracts—3 months, 6 months. It's always short. When your contract ends, it feels like your heart stops, wondering, "What's going to happen? Will they renew my contract?" (Tuana, F, 31)

The second stress factor is the capacity of the practice of bounded labour to exert control over migrant call centre workers as a disciplinary tool in the workplace. For TCNs, whose mobility opportunities are contingent upon the company and the

sponsorship regulations, it is exceedingly challenging to contest or resist the working conditions that have been described as exhausting, stressful, demanding, emotionally burdensome, and even inhumane. Furthermore, a considerable proportion of the participants perceive their employment at the call centre to represent a decline in their occupational status, given that the duties and responsibilities they undertake do not align with their educational qualifications. Conversely, the aforementioned conditions of bounded labour foster the development of disciplined and diligent employees, who are willing to accept the trade-off for a life in this global city. This negotiation process between the work satisfaction and life in Europe are reflected in the interviews:

> It's not easy for Turks here, and it's the same for people from countries like Tunisia. They often feel stuck. Many hate their jobs, but they lack the confidence or opportunity to resign whenever they want. Fundamentally, they don't want to return to Türkiye. The company says, 'If yo're not working here, I won't renew your permit.' This creates a sense of fear and makes the situation feel inescapable. Many people are unhappy—if they could, they'd resign immediately, but they can't because they have no other options. The situation in Türkiye worsens every year, leaving them with little choice. (Caner, M, 32)

> When I first arrived, I had 1-month or 3-month contracts, and there was always this pressure from the company—like, 'If your contract ends and we don't renew it, you'll have to go back home.' Because of this, you always want to keep your performance rates high, so they'll renew your contract. (Nazım, M, 34)

Scott and Rye (2023) elucidate this phenomenon by proposing that contemporary capitalism requires the mobility and immobility of labour, engendering novel modes of control and exploitation of workers at multiple scales and across transnational boundaries. A comprehensive investigation of European horticulture reveals that the seasonal and contingent nature of work, coupled with the prevailing regulatory framework, result in a productive workforce due to migrant workers' willingness to enhance their reemployment prospects for the subsequent season. The authors draw their argument mainly from Harvey's (1982, as cited in Scott and Rye, 2023) work on geographies of labour power. They illustrate that free mobility of labour is required and also promoted. However, once employed, labourers need to be fixed in place. This contradiction between the concepts of mobility and immobility is

attempted to be resolved through the implementation of stringent mobility and visa regulations by host countries, such as the introduction of temporary and seasonal visas, particularly for agricultural work. This pattern is evidently apparent in our case despite the distinct sector and job market in question. A multinational call centre company seeks to utilise mobile labour power and maintain their immobility throughout the duration of their employment. In particular, for the TCNs, this is made possible by the implementation of specific visa regulations, which guarantee both consent and control.

In one of the most prominent works on bounded labour, focusing on the dormitory labour regime in China, Pun (2005) and Smith and Pun (2006) argue that this system "functions as a form of coercive control, whereby employers have power not only over employment but also the housing needs of employees" (Smith & Pun, 2006, p.1456). In the present case, it can be argued that a more extensive form of this phenomenon is observed, whereby the power of the employer extends beyond the employment relationship to encompass the life and residence of employees in a specific country. This form of total control through the bounded labour relationship has the effect of reducing migrants' bargaining power, causing feelings of temporality and deepening their precarity.

Well aware of the limitations to their mobility in both their everyday lives and in the labour market, migrants in this case study respond to these constraints in a variety of ways, drawing on their experiences and understanding of the underlying structural conditions. Considering the relative and dynamic nature of mobility and immobility as proposed by Glick Schiller and Salazar (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013; Salazar, 2021), the following section will examine on the ways in which immobility is experienced and responded to at different levels by analysing the individual strategies employed by migrants in coping with the ambiguity they face.

6.4. Strategies

During my time in the field, I identified three prevalent strategies employed by migrants in response to the vulnerable and uncertain circumstances imposed by visa

and migration regulations. The aforementioned strategies may be classified as follows: acceptance, advancement and achieving mobility. It should be noted that these typologies are not considered to be mutually exclusive or sharply divided. Rather, they are regarded as permeable and fluid, with the potential for movement across the categories during the migration process. Nevertheless, it is essential to elucidate each of these concepts and to examine the interrelationship between structural conditions and individual adaptations.

6.4.1. Accepting Partial Mobility

One of the primary strategies that the research participants have developed is the acceptance of, furthermore the celebration of their mobility. The majority of participants view the call centre work, with all its inherent disadvantages, as a means of achieving the desired mobility and the lifestyle they have long aspired to in Europe. The reference points that inform their perceptions and actions are typically shaped by their prior experiences of living and working in Türkiye. This dual frame of reference (as outlined by Waldinger and Lichter, 2003) – which can be summarised as "judging conditions 'here' by the standards 'back home'" (p. 9) – increases the likelihood of migrants accepting their circumstances. Participants who have adopted an attitude of acceptance are more likely to direct their attention towards the advantages afforded to them by the recruitment policy of this particular institution and its associated employment. For example, respondents identified scheduled working hours and breaks, regular payment of wages, written official contracts, work-time balance, optional and paid overtime, and the absence of mobbing from managers as the most positive aspects of the work. Even though these same respondents also recognize the demanding, dull, routinised, and de-skilling aspects of call centre work and the condition of bounded labour during our interviews, at the end they appreciate the presence of these positive factors. Cemile (F, 41) is one of the participants who has embraced a strategy of acceptance, drawing upon her experience of six years employment at the call centre in Athens and her contentment. Originally graduated from the journalism department and practised her profession in Türkiye for seven years, describes her experience as characterised by precarity:

> In the past 7 years, I have changed jobs frequently, and when you look at my CV, I can't even write them all down. There are many places I haven't even mentioned on my CV. How should I write it? I've been in some jobs for 2 months and then left, in others for 3 months and then left; I can't write that. In every place I worked, my salary wasn't paid, my insurance wasn't taken care of, I had to beg for the salary I rightfully earned every month… I've completed 6 years here, and not a single day did my salary delay, nor my insurance. Not a penny remained unpaid; they pay every penny down to the last decimal point. We receive our salaries down to the decimal point. This is what my country doesn't do for me; it's done by others. It offers me many opportunities that Türkiye does not provide. I've already given up on the profession I love, so yes, I want to continue here.

When considering the prevailing working conditions and the standards set forth by labour law, which are more secure than those experienced or witnessed in their countries of origin, it is evident that this call centre position represents an opportunity for those seeking to escape and become a part of the mobile privileged strata of Turkish society by gaining a foothold in the West. Apart from providing their international mobility, the job in the call centre also offers a range of advantages to the participants including leisure, lifestyle, international community they enjoy being part of, freedom from different forms of cultural and social constrains as well as expectations they had in Türkiye. It is evident that for the participants in this group, the aforementioned advantages outweigh the disadvantages associated with working as a labourer in a call centre. For them, their occupation is just like any other job: inherently boring and stressful, but nonetheless a means to an end. They perceive this as a means of enhancing their overall quality of life, particularly outside of their professional obligations and designated work hours. This represents a trade-off between the spheres of one's professional and private lives.

In alignment with Lloyd's (2012) investigation of younger call centre workers in the UK, the participants in my research do not associate themselves with the call centre work itself. Instead, they link their identity with the benefits it offers, such as "leisure and consumer activities" (p. 631), which in this case also includes their mobility. The concept of consumption and the power of spending represent another significant reference point for participants, as this is also exemplified by the case of Indian call centre workers (Murphy, 2011), who assert their global middle-class status through a Western, consumption-oriented lifestyle and values. In the case of India, call centre

employees are not only remunerated at an above-average salaries typical in telecommunications sector, enabling them to maintain a certain standard of living; they are also able to find a professional environment where they can engage with Western clients and colleagues who have a similar outlook to themselves and are qualified to participate in the global economy, for example, by having English language skills. As Murphy (2011) asserts, call centre workers engaged in transnational business processes make strategic use of the opportunities presented to them and their role within the global capitalist system. Similarly, an analysis of the interview data of the migrant call centre workers in Athens indicates that research participants who have accepted their circumstances are aware that the opportunity in question emerged under the conditions of the global economy and was designed for the benefit of multinationals, which has led to their mobility in the region. They are purposefully leveraging the existing system and its requirements to their advantage, particularly with regards to the limited options and immobility conditions faced by Turkish nationals, especially within the European context. Similarly to Cemile's comparison of working conditions and labour regulations between two countries, Selim (M, 35) also employs a dual frame of reference. He presents his content in a similar manner, primarily focusing on the discrepancies in spending power:

> I'm actually quite satisfied that I came here. Everything is very different; from the money we receive for the hours we work to the way our managers treat us. I thought for a similar job, I can live better here. I can afford plane tickets when I want to travel. For example, I had a bank debt back in Türkiye, I've easily paid that off here. I'm planning to buy a car right now; I've saved up money. Owning a car hasn't really been a dream for me in Türkiye. I compared these things even before coming here. Also, I was imagining that a European country would be more comfortable than Türkiye, at least people would be more open-minded, and it turns out so.

He proceeds to discuss the practicalities of his role in the call centre, noting that "Every job has its own difficulties, and the positive aspects outweigh the negatives for me. I like working in an office environment. I will continue in this job in the future for as long as it takes". Another participant Okan (M, 30) describes the pivotal role played by this job opportunity and the recruitment scheme for their mobility in a very striking way: "It's a job that I never imagine myself doing it as a profession, but at the same it's a golden key that takes you abroad". This sentiment reflects a common

perception of this vacancy with relocation sponsorship as a valuable instrument, a gateway to new opportunities. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that individuals who adopt an accepting attitude and focus on the positive aspects of this job opportunity are more likely to be from lower educational attainment backgrounds, such as dropouts or those who have completed two-year associate programs.

My observations in the field also indicate that migrants who can be classified under this group as accepting and enjoying the opportunities of their partial mobility tend to demonstrate a greater tolerance towards the laws and regulations which limit their spatial and occupational mobility. These migrants concur with the justifications and rationale of these regulations from the standpoint of both the company and the state. For example, they provided specific instances of how the mobility rights afforded by the company's regulations were exploited by numerous individuals in the past. Consequently, to safeguard their interests, they felt compelled to re-evaluate and adjust the regulations as a precautionary measure. Similarly, wage differentiation within the company between individuals proficient in different languages for the same role or short-term contracts is viewed as a legitimate practice, contingent upon an assessment of the equilibrium between supply and demand. The following quotation provides an illustrative example of this perspective:

> The company kind of ties you down. Athens has been a stepping stone for people in the past—workers who started here and then moved on to other countries. The company doesn't want that. Their attitude is, "If we're investing in you, we're not going to give you an open residence permit to let you go wherever you want." So, with the permit they give you, you're basically stuck working for them. (Caner, M, 32)

> But there's a bit of profiling going on. Previously, the residence permit issued by the company would be ready in a month and covered all of Europe. However, some Turks and Tunisians took advantage of this by leaving the company and moving to Germany or other European countries. Because of this, the company now delays issuing the card—it takes 5-6 months instead of just one. This privilege was abused. A similar bias exists when looking for housing. It didn't happen to me personally, but others have faced this kind of prejudice. (İlayda, F, 29)

> We're Turkish citizens, and working in Europe is genuinely tough. You have to be highly qualified, and your employer needs to prove there's no EU citizen available who can do the job as well as you. They even have to submit

> paperwork and pay extra fees. Only then you can be hired. I also tell my friends that before you came here, everything was already written in the contract—how long you'd work, how much you'd earn, and what the conditions would be. Did you sign it without reading? Or, if you signed it but don't agree with it, why did you come? And if you're unhappy now, why not just go back? You can't change a corporate business on your own. Thinking otherwise will only lead to frustration and eventually depression. (Melis, F, 29)

> People speaking different languages earn different salaries. For example, if you know Hebrew, you get paid more because it's a rare skill. Also, because of Greece's climate, people from colder countries like Norway or Denmark often come here, spend three months enjoying a summer vacation, earn their money, and then leave. For a Turk, it's a bit harder—we earn less than they do. It's not really about the language itself, but more about supply and demand. If there were 100 or 1,000 Norwegians here looking for jobs, they'd get paid less too. (…) (to get the job) If we're talking about things like having a university degree, that can change. For instance, if you know Hebrew, you don't necessarily need to have a university degree. But if you're Turkish, they tend to be more selective. I'm not calling it discrimination; it's just the basic supply and demand. I mean, if you let them there would be a lot of people willing to come from our country. (Nazım, M, 34)

The statements made by the participants illustrate that the regimes of mobility are internalised by the actors who are situated in disadvantaged positions within this hierarchy. By accepting the existing structures as a given, they attempt to navigate their way through the potential avenues that exist to circumvent these structures. As the acceptance strategy is a prevalent one among call centre workers of Turkish nationality, these individuals seek to maintain their mobility status, which is contingent upon the consecutive renewal of their labour contracts. As a result, Turkish nationals in the company are recognised as hard-working, intelligent and educated. This perception has been repeatedly highlighted during the course of the interviews, and was also corroborated by a former human resources agent in an informal discussion.

6.4.2. Career Advancement

"Working in a call centre and not dealing with calls is a luxury" (Nazım, M, 34)

The second strategy frequently employed to address the limitations of restricted mobility and bounded labour is career advancement. Migrants who benefit from

employer sponsorship for their initial mobility, despite the associated constraints, and reside in Athens are cognizant of their obligation to the sponsoring company in accordance with the prevailing migration regulations. These regulations mandate that they remain in their designated roles and are susceptible to de-qualification. As they are unable to apply for alternative employment opportunities that align more closely with their personal interests, qualifications and educational background, they have sought to address this issue of occupational immobility by pursuing internal promotions within the organisation. The arduous nature of the job, particularly at the entry level, where the role is that of a customer services call agent, has been frequently highlighted during the course of the interviews.

However, it is not only the difficulties that participants experience; they also express resentment about the degradation of their skills and labour. This is due to the repetitive, intensified, impersonalised nature of the work, which they perceive as devoid of meaning or satisfaction. Furthermore, they believe that this work does not contribute to their personal or career development. As Sert (2016) has argued, the phenomenon of de-qualification plays a pivotal role in shaping the precariousness experienced by many migrant workers. This perspective was echoed by interview participants, who expressed significant apprehension regarding their prospects as call centre agents. Many informants indicated that, in light of their university education and skills, they refrain from including their current call centre agent positions on their CVs, as they perceive this to potentially devalue and degrade their professional profiles. Due to the de-skilling they have experienced, they believe that the years they have spent in this role will not be recognised as valid work experience elsewhere, leading them to feel that they are wasting their potential and all the years of education invested in a role that does not offer them a promising future.

It is important to note, however, that the restricted mobility of migrants in the Greek labour market is not solely a consequence of the country's visa policies and migration regulations. Despite overcoming the legal restrictions imposed by the restricted visa, numerous other factors impede their integration into the labour market. These include language barriers, the non-recognition of degrees, a lack of relevant work experience, the absence of networks and information about the job

market. Therefore, career advancement and promoting within the multinational call centre company in Greece where migrants gained some experience in time at the entry level positions, learned more about the company, opportunities and the people there, along with the English as a main working language rather than Greek, has been considered by many as an optimum solution to get rid of the de-skilling, repetitive, non-satisfactory call centre work with accompanying devaluation.

Despite the persistence of the educational mismatch inherent to this strategy, it offers a more secure employment opportunity and mitigates the precarity and future uncertainty faced by migrants with limited mobility prospects in Greece. A role in one of the various lower to mid-level managerial positions within the company usually entails longer employment contracts, which guarantee the issue of a residence permit and alleviate the related stress. Additionally, it provides higher personal job satisfaction, restores damaged self-esteem, particularly regarding career prospects, and therefore reduces the devaluation effect of de-qualification after migration. The following passage is taken from the account of Nazım (M, 34), a former engineer who participated in the study. It elucidates the significance of internal promotion within the call centre company from his perspective:

> One of the things people think about most when working in a call centre is: I'm useless. Anybody who can read and write can do this job. They don't want you to use your brain. What they want from you is to follow the directions… We (and his Greek citizen wife) were both on the lines, having calls until 3-4 months ago. But now we've both got a promotion. It's called work force management department. So you're basically organising how people work… My current position is a bit more like a real job. When I first came here to work in a call centre, I am a geological engineer, I have geographical information systems expertise and imagine a man calls you and tells you that their device is not working, you tell them to press the button or something. This was a real shock. Yes, earning money is good, but there was that professional dissatisfaction, you say what the hell am I doing here? Time passes and you ask yourself how many more years can I talk on the phone as an agent? Because human psychology can't take it… Okay I am not doing my own profession but remember I just told you about the real job. For example, an agent in a call centre, this is something you cannot put on your CV, but work force management you can put. After some years of experience, you can apply for a job in the Netherlands let's say for the similar position. Probably any company with many employees working in shifts needs people like you because it needs to be organised. You can find a job anywhere in labour management.

He further states that, following his marriage, he is no longer bound by the terms of his previous employment contract. As the family member of a Greek citizen, he is entitled to full market access. Nevertheless, he also states that, upon discovering an opportunity to advance within the company, which he characterises as a "real job" that can be listed on a CV with pride, it is acceptable to remain with the call centre company, where he remarks that "the company expects English as a language of communication. You don't need to know Greek to exist in the company, you can move up the ladders without knowing Greek".

This approach enables individuals to perceive their work as meaningful and useful in terms of future career development. Asya (F, 27), who graduated from the English and German translation department, previously worked as a language teacher in Turkey during and after her university education. She expresses clear job satisfaction following her promotion and relates her new position in the company to her previous profession:

> You know, I said I used to be a teacher. I always loved teaching and I still love it. My main goal up until now was to be a trainer in the company. I mean, trainer because it was the most suitable position for me here and I was chasing for an open vacancy so that I could apply, but it didn't happen… Then I have promoted to be a supervisor for an English team 6 months ago, I am responsible from 15 people. So far, this was the only department where I could contribute myself most. You can learn the background of the business. It also evoked the old feelings in me about helping others. They ask me questions about clients and their problems. For such instances I try to guide, inform and support them. Other than that, they have requests regarding their vacations and shifts. It's nice to be counselled for these things. I give my best to make things work out for them. We have a really nice bond between us right now.

As the aforementioned examples illustrate, advancement within the company serves to alleviate the insecurities experienced by migrants with limited mobility opportunities in their country of destination. It fosters a sense of belonging to the organisation, whereby individuals perceive a sense of trust, involvement in decision-making processes, the capacity to take initiative, and the opportunity to secure longer-term employment contracts. Furthermore, feelings of worthlessness resulting from alienating work practices at the entry-level positions and working in a job below one's level of education and qualifications in a precarious situation are

partially restored for the participants when they are promoted to mid-level managerial positions. In light of the constrained opportunities under the rigorous and selective visa regulations for third-country nationals whose mobility in Greece is contingent upon their employment contract, it is evident that advancing within the sponsoring call centre company is a strategy employed by numerous participants to surmount the challenges pertaining to job satisfaction, de-qualification, and the prevalence of insecure and precarious working conditions.

6.4.3. Achieving Mobility

It is unsurprising that many participants initially viewed the migration to Greece through the call centre job as a stepping stone, given that it marks the beginning of their mobility. This is because it is assumed that migrating to a European country would automatically result in the acquisition of certain mobility rights and a wide range of opportunities throughout Europe. This mobility opportunity is perceived as a means of experiencing life in Europe, even in peripheral regions where it is seen as geographically and culturally proximate to Türkiye. This reduces the perceived risks of migration initially, or alternatively, it is viewed as a stepping stone towards a larger migration plan, enabling individuals to escape their country of origin, Türkiye, and move further west. However, upon realising that the scope and validity of their mobility rights are quite limited when faced with immobility and bounded labour in Greece, migrants embark on a search for alternative avenues through which they can ensure the security of their present situation and future mobility prospects.

In the field, during the interviews and casual conversations with the participants, a similar narrative emerged repeatedly regarding the potential legal procedures for obtaining more extensive mobility rights in Greece and Europe. The vast majority of the information available on this topic observed to be obtained through word of mouth within the social circles of migrants. Consequently, many of the participants were obliged to note that they lacked a solid knowledge base or had not conducted sufficient research into the details. Nevertheless, a significant number of individuals expressed a desire to pursue and plan to follow the necessary steps. The rumour is haunting Athens among the Turkish citizen call centre workers- the rumour of free

mobility. This frequently referenced legal route to achieving free mobility in Greece can be traced from interviews, as exemplified by Burak's (M, 44) and Melis's (F, 29) account, which bears resemblance to numerous other interviews with minor differences. It provides a summary of the legal situation and requisite steps for attaining this status:

> After five years, you can take an exam to obtain permanent residency. Once you acquire permanent residency, you are issued a card granting full access to the European Union's labour market. With this card, you can apply for jobs in any EU country without needing additional work permits or bureaucratic processes. This isn't specific to Greece; it's part of EU labour laws. But the bureaucratic procedures vary from country to country, in Greece, you typically need to either pass an A2-level language and cultural history exam or demonstrate B1-level proficiency in Greek. After meeting these requirements, you're issued a card valid across all 28 EU countries, allowing you to work in any field you choose. Frankly, this is my main expectation for the near future.
>
> When I've been here for five years and have sufficient knowledge of Greek, I'll get a full residence and work permit for Europe. If you meet the requirements at the end of the five years, you apply and your card and status will change. At the moment my card says 'specific purpose', which means I can only work for call centre companies. I can't work in Kostas' grocery store, for example. But after the fifth year, when I get this new card, I'll be able to work anywhere in Greece or Europe.

This opportunity for greater mobility is often perceived as an additional benefit that should be pursued, rather than as an integral component of the initial migration plan. However, upon its realization, this mobility opportunity is viewed favourably by migrants, as it provides a safety net and facilitates alternative planning. Participants like Merve (F, 30) emphasise that she would consider the possibility of being granted free movement rights, but has not based her migration plans on this entitlement:

> I would apply for the card that becomes available after five years. It's already been three years, so if nothing goes wrong, I plan to stay two more years. Since I've already stayed this long, I might as well wait and get the residency card. That said, I'm not staying in Greece just for the card—I'm here regardless. And I didn't come here with the intention of getting the card in the first place.

This regulation also appears to encourage individuals to extend their stay in order to complete the five-year period, to learn Greek, and to persevere in their employment,

in the expectation of a substantial benefit in return for their efforts. This is intended to facilitate their liberation from the geographical and occupational immobility that they have experienced at their destination of migration. Sezen (F, 27) discusses the advantages of acquiring the aforementioned permit in terms of facilitating freedoms, while acknowledging the necessity to develop her proficiency in the Greek language:

> Right now, the only barrier for me is the language—I haven't tried to learn it, and that's on me. But other than that, of course, I'd apply. Why not? It would actually give me more freedom, not just to stay here but also to move somewhere else. With that in mind, I definitely want to apply.

This picture confirms the argument that migrants usually have distorted, limited and incomplete information about migration destinations and the policies there (Fischer et al., 2020; Malmberg, 2020), rather, as we see in our case, they have only more general and vague information and perceptions about these policies when deciding on migration destinations (Crawley & Hagen-Zanker, 2019). Therefore, migrants usually start to develop or adapt their strategies during the migration process as they learn more about the policies and legal procedures. Aras's (M, 31) own testimony provides further insight into this matter. He concedes that he lacks a comprehensive understanding of the matter, and thus intends to observe and learn from the experiences of his superiors in order to gain insight into the administrative procedures involved in conferring free mobility rights:

> If I learn Greek, it would benefit me personally, and I could also consider this option. I'm thinking about it because it could offer flexibility to work in different jobs. But as of now, I haven't looked into it myself. That's just what people say. Once others who came here before me have tried it and shared their experiences, I'll see for myself.

The research also revealed that not only are the decisions of migrants themselves dynamic, undergoing change and development throughout the course of migration, but also that the policies of states involved in the process are similarly not static. Rather, they can vary and evolve in response to changing conditions. Several participants recounted the historical background of this visa category and the preceding circumstances. These narrations demonstrate that the concept of a "stepping stone" approach to migration to Greece is not a recent phenomenon. İzel

(F, 32) is one of those who explain that this place used to serve as a stepping stone in the past, giving the example of those who worked at this company in the past and made their way to the USA on a tourist visa:

> There was a time when this was a pretty regular occurrence. As we work for an international company here, it was really straightforward for us to get U.S. visas. Some of my friends got their U.S. visas and moved to America. As far as I know, they've been there for the last three years or so. They went on a tourist visa and then applied for asylum. I know at least five or seven people who've done this. They're now building their lives there. People went to very different places and used this as a stepping stone.

All in all, the possibility of obtaining a full residence permit with no geographical and occupational restrictions after five years of residency in the host country is widely regarded as the optimal (legal) solution that promises total mobility and autonomy, as well as a sense of security. Therefore, aiming to achieve this entitlement appears to be another common strategy among the Turkish call centre workers in Athens when dealing with their immobility as TCNs.

This chapter explores the impact of visa regulations and perceived immobility on the formation of migrants' aspirations, and the emergence of novel migration corridors within the evolving migration and global labour market landscape. By focusing on the impact of such structural factors within the global power relations and hierarchies, the chapter also explores the individual strategies adopted by migrants in the face of uncertainty as part of the global precariat.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This research has started with the aim of understanding a recent group of migrants from Türkiye who can be classified and analysed under the new wave migration of highly skilled individuals to Athens, Greece, an unpopular destination when considering the institutionalised migration routes from Türkiye to abroad, which have developed since the 1960s to the present day. The objective of this research is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to explore and identify the common characteristics of this group and the motivations behind their migratory movements within Türkiye's dynamic migration system. Secondly, it aims to distinguish this phenomenon examined in this case from its predecessors and contemporaries, then interpret and locate this unique migration movement within the broader context of global migration flows.

This study regards highly skilled migration as an indispensable part and a natural outcome of globalisation and the transformation in work organisation i.e. the knowledge economy in which the white-collar positions in the service sector outnumber the blue-collar ones in the industries predominantly based on knowledge, science and technology. This process is termed as "post-industrial society", "information society", "post-Fordism", or "the new capitalism" by several scholars (Bell, 1974; Castells, 2005; Harvey, 1990; Sennett, 1997). This change in work has created a noticeable demand for diversified types of labour with new skill sets across numerous industries worldwide. Moreover, there has been an increasing prevalence of economic, demographic, and democratic divides on a global scale. This imbalance has led to an increased propensity for international mobility. Despite the relocation of manufacturing and mass production from Western developed countries to low-wage economies, there remains a significant demand for diverse forms of migrant

labour across various occupations within predominantly service-based economies. This demand encompasses both highly skilled positions and casual and temporary employment in agriculture and care work. In response to this demand and to enhance their competitive advantage within this global economic order, governments in developed countries strategically formulate various policies to recruit and manage labour migrants. Notwithstanding the existence of migration patterns involving highly skilled individuals, a comprehensive review of extant literature reveals that, in the early stages, highly skilled migrants were an invisible and overlooked group in migration studies. Salt (1997) identifies two primary reasons why the migration of highly skilled individuals was initially overlooked in academic research. Firstly, their mobility was often temporary and short-term, leading to their exclusion from traditional migration studies. Additionally, their movement within regions with free mobility, such as Europe, made them difficult to capture through statistical methods. Secondly, due to their socio-economic status, cultural background, racial composition, and relatively small numbers, they were not viewed as a significant concern for host countries requiring integration policies. Over the past two decades, research on international migration has begun to classify highly skilled migration as a distinct phenomenon, demonstrating its increasing significance in global migration trends.

Nevertheless, the categorisation of highly skilled migrants according to the geographies of their origins and destinations is subject to imbalances, which are influenced by racial and ethnic biases. In this study this aspect of highly skilled migration was taken into account. Discussions concerning the advantageous positions of highly skilled migrants in international labour markets give the impression that the mobility and labour market integration of highly skilled workers is always seamless. However, even those with the highest qualifications are not immune to global power dynamics. Research has demonstrated that there are numerous instances in which they encounter forms of constraint and immobility, which are largely dependent on geographical location (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Salazar, 2021).

When considering the studies on Türkiye as migrant sending country, a brief review of the extant literature indicates that highly skilled migration from Türkiye was

initially directed towards developed Western countries, primarily the United States. This phenomenon was driven by factors such as the availability of extensive scientific research opportunities, support for career development, superior working conditions, higher income levels, and an overall improved quality of life. Consequently, research efforts have focused on understanding migrants to these regions in the brain drain perspective. The second body of literature focuses on the more recent migration of highly skilled individuals to European destinations, where they meet established immigrant communities from the 60-year history of guest workers. The concept of "new wave migration" is a term that has been employed in academic literature to denote this distinct migratory phenomenon. This concept serves to highlight the distinguishing characteristics of the recent migrant population when compared with earlier migrant cohorts. This perspective suggests that new wave migrants distinguish themselves from previous generations of migrants not only by their aspiration for professional success and higher income, but also by their motivation to enhance their cultural and symbolic capital, experience different cultures, test and discover themselves, and escape social pressures and expectations they had in Türkiye. Research on highly skilled and new wave migration from Türkiye has historically focused on the most prevalent and notable destination countries, namely developed European nations such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, as well as North American countries including the United States and Canada. However, there has been a lack of attention paid to alternative migration routes and employment choices.

Therefore, this research primarily contributes to the highly skilled migration literature from Türkiye by demonstrating its diversity and the existence of alternative courses. The research reveals that the migration of educated graduates, who are considered to be highly skilled, is not without its challenges, that it is not a flawless movement only in the direction of the popular developed destination countries, as it is often portrayed. On the contrary, it reveals a migration to a country with lower income levels - third from the bottom among EU countries in the ranking of average annual full time adjusted salaries- where the country is also experiencing an exodus of its educated young population itself, due to a lack of opportunities. The analysis indicates that Turkish citizens' migration patterns are significantly determined by

their respective citizenship and the prevailing mobility regimes specific to their country of origin, which can explain this specific route and form of migration (call centre labour migrant in Athens) and the various forms of immobility even after migration. In consideration of these intricacies and uncertainties in the migration decision of educated youth from Türkiye to an unprecedented destination despite all the supposed downsides, the findings of this comprehensive research, grounded in the lived experiences and narratives of migrants, substantiate the proposition advanced by Weinar and Klekowski von Koppenfels (2020, p. 105) with respect to the perspectives of highly skilled migrants.

> Taking the perspective of the highly skilled migrant into account helps us understand why many of them would stay, even if faced with less than ideal professional pathways in the destination country, and helps us understand why some would move once again regardless of their professional success in the destination country. Elements of integration that are less directly focused on careers, such as lifestyle, urban environment (e.g. Global City), security are all important elements of migrants' decision-making.

The primary empirical chapter of this thesis demonstrates that Turkish new wave migration patterns bear a notable resemblance to those observed in intra-European youth mobilities. This observation is particularly salient when considering highly educated and skilled individuals from countries in the peripheral Europe towards the core. The findings presented in Chapter 5 indicate that the research participants are predominantly young adults who have attained a high level of education, are unmarried, and have no children. Furthermore, it is observed that a period spent abroad is a facilitating factor for further mobility, with participants reporting a preference for the European lifestyle and cultural exploration it offers. The narratives also frequently allude to employment and unemployment experiences, which include poor working conditions, limited wage prospects, poor work-life balance, and the absence of a meritocratic labour market. Furthermore, the social and political transformation experienced by Turkish society in its shift towards an increasingly Islamic and authoritarian paradigm is identified as a contributing factor to their decisions to seek opportunities abroad. The striking parallels between the new European youth migrations and the Turkish new wave migrations are largely found on the non-economic explanations of the rationale behind the leaving their countries

of origin. These non-economic drivers include the political culture in the home country and mistrust to the institutions, lack of career prospects, lack of meritocracy, therefore feelings of frustration and disappointment in the socioeconomic conditions at home. These go along with the search for freedom, independent life, and personal fulfilment through migration in abroad in a vivid multicultural city. This explains the circumstances of individuals who do not increase their income to a considerable extent, or of educated migrants employed in low-status roles. Similarly, for the new wave migration from Türkiye, non-economic considerations explain Greece as a destination country as well as the call centre employment.

In the second empirical chapter, the role of visa regimes and migration regulations in shaping the migration realities of the new wave migrants are thoroughly discussed. It shows that limited mobility opportunities for the Turkish citizens based on their passport initially increase their migration aspirations to become more mobile. However it is also revealed that the same regulations are important to direct migration flows towards certain destinations. To illustrate, the existence of job opportunities in conjunction with the provision of visa sponsorship by Greece has resulted in an influx of migrants from this particular direction. This research also shows that migrant call centre workers have face with physical and occupational immobility in their course of migration as a result of the specific migration regulations. This dissertation finally explores the strategies employed by the group of migrants under discussion to cope with the various and often uncertain circumstances to which they are subjected when confronted with different forms of immobility.

The main findings of this thesis indicate that a segment of Turkish new wave migrants is embarking on journeys toward destinations where highly skilled emigration is a prevalent social phenomenon, predominantly undertaken by young individuals with similar socio-economic backgrounds and driven by comparable rationales and motivations. Therefore, within the global migration hierarchies, recent migratory movements from Türkiye (conceptualized as the new wave in the literature) which is generally considered to be a privileged social stratum with a middle-class socioeconomic profile, educational and urban backgrounds, are still lagging behind their European counterparts and incorporate to the new European

migration from the outer periphery. The present study does not adequately address the call centre industry and the labour processes structured around migrants providing services in their native languages. Consequently, this subject, which lies beyond the present research's purview, signifies a lacuna in the extant literature. It is therefore recommended that future studies direct their efforts towards addressing this gap.

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APPENDICES

A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

A.1 Interview Questionnaire in Turkish

Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu

1) Hayat öyküsü
    a. Yaş
    b. Cinsiyet
    c. Doğum yeri
    d. Eğitim durumu (üniversite ve şehir)
    e. Evlilik (tarihi, eşi, nerede tanıştıkları)
    f. Çocuklar (doğum tarihi ve yeri)
    g. Türkiye'deki çalışma deneyimleri
    h. Türkiye'de en son ikamet edilen şehir

2) Göç etme hakkında
    a. Göç etme kararını nasıl aldığınızı anlatır mısınız?
    b. Bu kararı almanızda nelerin etkili olduğunu anlatabilir misiniz?
    c. Bu işten nasıl haberdar oldunuz?
    d. Başvuru sürecinizi anlatır mısınız?
    e. Çalışma izni süreci nasıl? Nasıl bir izin, neleri kapsıyor?
    f. Hangi tarihte buraya geldiniz?
    g. Yunanistan'ı seçmenizin özel bir nedeni var mı?

3) İş ile ilgili
    a. Çalıştığınız şirketi anlatabilir misiniz?
    b. Kaç birim var, kaç kişi çalışıyor?
    c. Çalışma saatleri nasıl? Hangi saatler arasında çalışıyorsunuz? Fazladan mesai yapıyor musunuz?
    d. Sizin bu şirketteki pozisyonunuz nedir, yaptığınız işiniz neleri kapsıyor?
    e. Öncesinde bu işle/sektörle ilgili bir deneyiminiz var mıydı?
    f. Bu iş belirli bir deneyim ve eğitim (training) gerektiriyor mu?
    g. Bu işi nasıl ve ne kadar sürede öğrendiniz, eğitim ve adaptasyon süreci nasıl oldu?
    h. Bu işin zorlukları nelerdir, avantajları nelerdir?
    i. Kariyer ve yükselme olanakları nasıl? Böyle bir amacınız var mı?
    j. Gelecekte bu işi yapmayı düşünüyor musunuz?

4) Yunanistan'da yaşam
    a. Yunanistan'da Türk olmak/Türkiye'den gelen biri olmak nasıl? Bana anlatabilir misiniz?

b. Bir gününüz (iş günü ve tatil günü ayrı olarak) nasıl geçiyor?
c. İş dışı aktiviteleriniz nelerdir?
d. Dışarıda görüştüğünüz insanlar kimlerden oluşuyor? İş arkadaşlarınızla iş dışında da görüşüyor musunuz?
e. Nerede oturuyorsunuz? Oturduğunuz yer iş yerine yakın mı?
f. Diğer ülkelerden gelenlerle ilişkileriniz nasıl?

5) Gelecek beklentisi
   a. Çalışma izniniz ile ilgili olarak vatandaşlık hakkı kazanma süreci mevcut mu?
   b. Evet ise siz başvurmayı düşünüyor musunuz?
   c. Gelecekte iş/ülke değiştirme gibi bir düşünceniz var mı?

A.2 Interview Questionnaire in English

Semi-structured interview form

6) Life history
    a. Age
    b. Gender
    c. Birthplace
    d. Education status (institution and city/country)
    e. Marriage (date, the partner, where did they met)
    f. Children (birthplace and age)
    g. Prior work experience in Turkey
    h. The last city they used to reside in Turkey

7) About the migration
    a. Can you explain me how did you decide to migrate?
    b. Can you tell me what factors were effective in making this decision?
    c. How and from which channels did you hear about the job?
    d. Can you explain the application process?
    e. How was the process of obtaining the work permit? What kind of permit is that, what is the scope?
    f. When did you come to Greece? The date?
    g. Is there any specific reason for choosing Greece as a destination?

8) About the work
    a. Can you tell me about the company you work for?
    b. How many units/departments are there? How many people are employed? How many of them are coming from Turkey?
    c. What about the working hours? What hours do you work? Do you work overtime?
    d. What is your position in this company? What is the scope of your work?
    e. Before that, did you have any experience about this work/this sector?
    f. Does this work require any previous experience and education or training?
    g. How did you learn the job? How much time did it take to learn? Can you tell me about the training and adaptation process?
    h. What are the drawbacks/challenges of this job? What are the advantages?
    i. What about the career and advancement opportunities? Do you pursue such an advancement?
    j. Do you consider doing this job in the future?

9) Life in Greece
    a. How do you feel about being a Turk/ a person coming from Turkey in Greece? Can you tell me?
    b. Can you describe your typical day? (workday and off days)
    c. What are your daily activities out of work?
    d. Who are the people you meet/hangout outside? Do you see/meet with your coworkers outside of work?
    e. Where do you live, which neighborhood? Is it close to your workplace?
    f. How are your relations with people coming from other countries living in Athens?

10) Future expectation
    a. Is there any opportunity of acquiring citizenship regarding your work permit?
    b. If yes, are you considering applying for it?
    c. Do you have any idea of changing your job or moving another country in the future?

B. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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Sayı: 28620816 /

23 AĞUSTOS 2021

Konu : Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi : İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Dr.Öğr.Üyesi Besim Can ZIRH

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Helin Kardelen Kavuş'un "Türkiye'den Eğitimli Göçün Yeni Dalgası: Atina'da Çağrı Merkezi Çalışanları" başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **349-ODTU-2021** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU Sociology	2018
Erasmus Program Ph.D. Fieldwork	Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Social Anthropology, Greece	October 2021-February 2022
BS	METU Sociology	2015
Erasmus Program	University of Duisburg-Essen, Sociology, Germany	October 2013-February 2014

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrolment
2017- Present	İzmir University of Economics, Department of Sociology	Research Assistant

PROJECTS

Year	Project	Enrolment
19-30 June 2023	Erasmus+ Short-Term Doctoral Traineeship, University of Sussex Business School	Trainee
April-June 2021	Green Transition and Decent Work in İzmir and the Aegean: Building Academic and Stakeholder Networks for Research and Practice by University of Sussex & İzmir University of Economics	Researcher

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

PUBLICATIONS

1. Kavuş, H. K., Erköse, Y., & Eryar, D. (2023). Driving Green Job Opportunities in Sustainable Waste Management through Co-Production Strategies: Informal Recycling Workers, Municipalities, and the National Agenda—A Case Study of İzmir. *Social Sciences*, *12*(7), 387.
2. Kavuş, H. K. (2019). Diasporada güzellik: Almanya'da kadın etnik girişimciliği. *Kültür ve İletişim*, *22*(44), 95-124.

AWARDS

METU GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
2018-2019 Academic Year METU Graduate Courses Performance Award
as the most successful student in the Ph.D. Program of the Department of Sociology with CGPA of 4,00/4,00

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. "Households as workplaces in migration: Blurring meanings of work-home and mobile-immobile". Ethnographies of Capitalism: Economic Anthropology Days in Athens. Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens, Greece, 21 -22 May 2024.
2. "Bounded labour and immobility: The case of educated call centre migrants in Athens", Wednesday Seminars Winter Semester 2023-24 at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens, Greece, 1 November 2023.
3. "A New Wave of "High-Skilled" Migration from Turkey: Call Centre Workers in Athens", Future of Work Research Hub (Early Career Researcher Work-in-progress Series) at University of Sussex, UK, 21 June 2023.
4. "Reconsidering the highly skilled migration in the case of Turkish call-centre workers in Athens: Negotiations of qualification, perpetuation of uncertainties",

Uncertain Mobilities Symposium at University of Siegen, Online, 6 - 8 October 2022.

5. “Backstitching Different Shores of the Global Precarity: Turkish “New Wavers” working at the Call Centers in Athens”, The Nordic Migration Research Conference 2022, Re: Migration- New perspectives on movement, research, and society. Copenhagen, Denmark, 19 August 2022.

6. “Migration, Women and Entrepreneurship: Beauty Salons as Places of Intersection”, 20th Nordic Migration Research Conference &17th ETMU Conference, Online, 14 January 2021.

7. “Migration Management and Humanitarianism in the Context of Forced Migration in Turkey: The Role of Local Actors in the Case of Izmir”, Vienna Anthropology Days 2020, Online, 30 September 2020.

8. “Almanya’da Türk Etnik Girişimcilik: Güzellik Sekt.ründeki Kadınlar Örneği”, IX. ULUSAL SOSYOLOJİ KONGRESİ, Ankara, Turkey, 19 September 2019.

D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu araştırma, Türkiye'nin son yıllarda deneyimlediği göç dalgasının göz ardı edilen ve yeterince incelenmeyen bir bileşenine ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu grup yüksek nitelikli göçe dahil edilebilecek ve Avrupa'ya göç etmek için farklı bir strateji benimseyen, genç ve eğitimli bireylerden oluşmaktadır. Bu strateji, Avrupa'nın çeperinde (Atina, Yunanistan) yer alan küresel çağrı merkezi şirketlerinde geçici olarak çalışmak üzere göç edip, bunu daha geniş Avrupa coğrafyasına giriş için bir fırsata dönüştürmeyi amaçlamaktır.

Son beş yılda Türkiye'deki gençler üzerine yapılan birçok araştırma, bu demografik grubun göç etme arzusunun oldukça güçlü olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu durum, artan genç göçmen sayılarıyla da somut bir şekilde gözlemlenmektedir. Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu'nun göç istatistiklerine göre, 2022 yılında Türkiye'den göç eden kişi sayısı bir önceki yıla kıyasla %62,3 oranında artış göstermiştir ve bu artışın büyük bir kısmını gençler ve genç yetişkinler oluşturmaktadır. Resmi verilere göre, Türkiye'den göç edenler arasında en büyük yaş grubunu %15,8 ile 25-29 yaş aralığı oluştururken, bunu %13,4 ile 30-34 yaş grubu takip etmektedir (TÜİK, 2023).

Türkiye'de genç göçünün yükselen trendine ilişkin mevcut araştırmalar ve kamuoyu tartışmaları, bu olguyu büyük ölçüde beyin göçü kavramı çerçevesiyle sınırlı olarak ele almaktadır (Elveren, 2018). Bu bağlamda, bilim, teknoloji ve mühendislik gibi alanlarda uzmanlaşmış yüksek nitelikli bireylerin ülkeden ayrılması, genellikle menşe ülke açısından bir kayıp olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

Türkiye'nin göç tarihinde uluslararası hareketlilikleri beyin göçü olarak sınıflandırılabilecek bu en yeni aktörler, çeşitli yayınlarda giderek artan bir şekilde yeni dalga göçmenler olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu grup, sahip oldukları yüksek eğitim seviyeleri, yaşam tarzları, seküler yönelimleri, sosyoekonomik statüleri ve kentli arka planları ile yalnızca varış ülkelerindeki daha önce yerleşmiş göçmen

topluluklarından değil, aynı zamanda Türkiye'deki daha geniş nüfustan da farklılaşmaktadırlar (Türkmen, 2019). Bu kişiler arasında Türkiye'deki akademik görevlerinden ihraç edilenler de dahil olmak üzere akademisyenler, entelektüeller, sanatçılar, lisansüstü öğrenciler ve beyaz yakalı profesyoneller yer almaktadır.

Fakat yeni dalga göçmenler olarak adlandırılan bu grubu ve Türkiye'den artan göç eğilimini inceleyen akademik literatürün büyük bir bölümü yalnızca en çok tercih edilen belirli hedef ülkeler üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Bu bağlamda özellikle Almanya, en çok ilgi gören varış noktalarından biri olarak öne çıkmaktadır (Ağca-Varoğlu, 2020; Çömlekçi & Bozkanat, 2019; Okumuş, 2020; Oldac & Fancourt, 2021; Özçürümez & Aker, 2016).

Farklı sosyal geçmişlere sahip gençler arasında göç etme motivasyonundaki artış çeşitli araştırmalarla belgelenmiş olsa da bu arzularını geleneksel olmayan destinasyonlara göç ederek gerçekleştiren bireyler üzerine yapılan araştırmalar sınırlıdır. Özellikle, yazılım mühendisleri, finans uzmanları veya tıp doktorları gibi üst düzey profesyonellerin Batı'daki gelişmiş ülkelere yönelen geleneksel kariyer ve göç yollarının dışında kalan eğitimli gruplar üzerine yeterince çalışma bulunmamaktadır.

Balkan ülkelerinin Türkiye'den göç etme eğiliminde olan gençlerin yaşamak istedikleri ülkeler listesinde son sıralarda yer almasına rağmen (Lüküslü, 2024, s. 4), 2013 yılından bu yana Türkiye'nin batıdaki komşusu Yunanistan'ın başkenti Atina'ya çeşitli yollarla göç eden yeni göçmenlerden söz etmek mümkündür (Üret, 2021). Bu göçmenlerin önemli bir kısmı, çok dilli çağrı merkezlerinde çalışmak üzere özel istihdam sözleşmeleri yoluyla Yunanistan'a göç eden eğitimli gençlerden oluşmaktadır.

Bu araştırma, uluslararası ve çok dilli bir çağrı merkezinde çalışmak üzere Türkiye'den Atina'ya göç eden genç ve eğitimli göçmenlerden oluşan bu özel gruba odaklanarak Türkiye'nin genç neslinin yüksek eğitimli üyeleri tarafından benimsenen farklı göç stratejilerini ve yollarını keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bunun için, yapısal faktörlerin ve tarihsel süreçlerin de analize dahil edilmesi önem

taşımaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti vatandaşları nezdinde göç isteği yaratan yerel koşullar ile küresel hareketliliklerini kısıtlayan uluslararası rejimleri ele alarak Türkiye'den Atina'ya yerleşen göçmenlerin gerçekliklerini ve deneyimlerini ortaya koyma amacını gütmektedir.

Bu doğrultuda, ilk olarak bu yeni göçmen grubunun özellikleri ve geçmişleri, göç motivasyonları, Türkiye'deki hayata bakış açıları ve Yunanistan'da göçmen ve çağrı merkezi çalışanı olma deneyimlerini açıklamak amaçlanmıştır. Bu ilk odak noktası, göçmen olma olgusunu dinamik bir süreç olarak ele almaktadır, çünkü göç planları göç eyleminden önce başlamakta ve süreç içinde birden fazla yere bağlı olarak birden fazla yerde sürekli olarak evrilmeye devam etmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmada, zaman ve mekân sabitliğini aşmak adına ulusötesi lensin yanı sıra çok alanlı etnografi perspektifinden yararlanılmıştır.

İkinci olarak, bu tezde Glick Schiller ve Salazar (2013) tarafından önerilen, hareketliliği ve hareketsizliği tanımlarken eşitsiz küresel güç ilişkilerinin önemine değinen 'hareketlilik rejimleri' kavramsallaştırmasından yararlanılarak; bu durumun bu vakada özelinde gençlerin göç deneyimlerini ve göç tahayyüllerini birçok farklı aşamada nasıl etkilediği ele alınmaktadır. Farklı zamansal ve mekânsal bağlamlarda hareketsizlikle karşılaştıklarında göç projeleri nasıl ele alınmakta ve yeniden şekillendirilmektedir? Hareketlilik rejimleri ile neoliberal küresel sermaye nasıl etkileşime girmektedir ve ulusötesi çağrı merkezi istihdamında güvencesiz göçmen emeğininim sömürülmesine yol açmaktadır?

Son olarak, bu tez göç alan ülke olan Yunanistan'ın kendine özgü bağlamıyla ilgilenerek, emeğin ve çalışmanın küreselleşmesinin, Yunanistan'ın küresel pazarlara hizmet sunan ulusötesi çağrı merkezi şirketlerinin faaliyetleri için nasıl bir merkez haline geldiğini ve bu dönüşümün bölgesel göç hareketliliklerini nasıl tetiklediğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Yunanistan 2008 küresel finansal krizin de etkileriyle geçtiğimiz 10 yılda kendisi de eğitimli gençlerini özellikle serbest dolaşım hakkından yararlanarak Avrupa Birliği ülkeleri dahil olmak üzere Küresel Kuzeyin gelişmiş ülkelerine kaybeden bir ülkedir. Bunun yanı sıra, Avrupa'nın Asya ve Afrika ile sınırında bulunması dolayısıyla çok sayıda düzensiz göçmene ve mülteciye ev

sahipliği yapmaktadır. Fakat eğitimli ve profesyonel göçmenler için öne çıkan bir destinasyon değildir. Bu nedenle büyüyen çağrı merkezi sektörünün yarattığı çok dili çalışanlara yönelik talep ile birlikte Türkiye'den eğitimli gençlerin Yunanistan'a olan göçü tamamen yeni ve çalışılmamış bir olgudur. Bu doğrultuda bu çalışma, Yunanistan'daki çağrı merkezi istihdamının Türkiye'nin eğitimli gençleri için nasıl bir göç stratejisi olarak kullanıldığını ve göç süreçlerinin çeşitli aşamalarında hareketsizlikle karşılaştıklarında başa çıkma stratejilerini araştırmaktadır. Bu soruları yanıtlamak için, Ekim 2021 ile Şubat 2022 tarihleri arasında Atina'da beş ay süren etnografik saha çalışması yapılmış ve 31 göçmenle derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Tez boyunca kullanılan teorik çerçeve ve kavramsallaştırmalara açıklık getirmek için, öncelikle mevcut literatür gözden geçirilerek ana temalar, kavramlar ve bunların operasyonel tanımlarının yanı sıra çeşitli dönem ve bağlamlarda ortaya çıkışları, gelişimleri ve araçsallaştırılmaları sunulmuştur. Literatürün kapsamlı bir incelemesi, göç çalışmalarının bir zamanlar görünmez ve göz ardı edilen bir grup olan yüksek vasıflı göçmenleri güncel göç akımlarında belirgin ve hakim bir kategori olarak dahil etme sürecini ortaya koymaktadır.

Birleşmiş Milletler (BM), Ekonomik İşbirliği ve Kalkınma Örgütü (OECD), Uluslararası Göç Örgütü (IOM), Uluslararası Çalışma Örgütü (ILO) gibi kalkınma, işgücü ve göçle ilgili uluslararası kuruluşların rapor ve yayınları, küresel gündemdeki sıcak tartışmaları yansıtmaları ve faydalı kaynaklar sağlamaları nedeniyle yüksek vasıflı göç konusunun izini sürmek için iyi bir başlangıç noktası olabilir. Örneğin, OECD'nin 1997 yılında yayınladığı bir rapor, yüksek vasıflı göçmenlerin geniş yelpazesini kapsayacak bir tipoloji sağlayacak şekilde ilgili kavram ve tanımları bir araya getirmeye çalışmasıyla öne çıkmaktadır. Makalede Salt (1997) yüksek vasıflıların göçünün önemine dikkat çekmekte ve bu göçün akademik alanda geç fark edilmesini eleştirel bir şekilde tartışmaktadır.

Salt (Koser & Salt, 1997; Salt, 1997), genel göç çalışmaları içerisinde yüksek vasıflıların göçüne akademik ilginin erken dönemde gösterilmemesinin ardındaki nedenleri iki temel gerekçeye dayandırarak açıklamaktadır. Birincisi, genel olarak

hareketlerinin geçici ve kısa süreli olması nedeniyle bu kişilerin uzun süre göçmen olarak kabul edilmemesi ve hareketlerinin göç analizlerinin dışında tutulmuş olmasıdır. İkinci olarak, sınıfları, kültürleri, ırkları ve sayılarının azlığı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, yüksek vasıflı göçmenler göç alan ülkeler için entegrasyon amacıyla detaylı araştırma gerektiren bir sorun olarak algılanmamıştır. Bu iki ana neden, göçün heterojenliğinin ve hatta yüksek vasıflı göçmenler grubu içindeki farklı ve gelişen deneyimler farkına varılana kadar bu göçmen grubunu 'görünmez' kılmıştır. Bu durum, konuyu karmaşıklıklarıyla birlikte açıklamak için yeni kavramsallaştırmalar yapılması ihtiyacını doğurmuştur. Literatürde birçok kaynak yüksek vasıflı kişiler için analizlerinde yüksek öğrenim kriterini, yani üniversite diplomasını kullanmaktadır (Iredale, 2001; Vertovec, 2002).

Geleneksel olarak, yüksek vasıflı insanların göçünde beyin değişimi ve beyin israfı olmak üzere iki kavram kullanılmaktadır. Beyin değişimi, yaygın olarak bilinen beyin göçü ve beyin kazanımı kavramlarını içermektedir. Tüm yüksek vasıflı göçmenlerin eğitim profillerine uygun işlere atandıkları varsayıldığında; bu terimler bir taraftaki vasıflı bireylerin kaybını ve diğer tarafın ekonomik ve bilimsel gelişimine katkılarını ifade eder. Beyin israfı ise yüksek vasıflı göçmenlerin beceri ve uzmanlıklarını gittikleri yerdeki yeni işlerinde kullanmadıkları için atıl kaldıkları durumların altını çizmektedir (Salt, 1997).

Salt'ın (1997, s. 28) da belirttiği gibi, yüksek vasıflı göçmenlerin birçok devlet için gerekli olduğu belgelenmiştir. Bu nedenle, hükümetlerin yüksek vasıflılar için daha cazip hale gelmek ve küresel yetenek rekabetinde yerlerini güvence altına almak için politikalar uyguladıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Yüksek vasıflılar için cazip koşullar yaratmaya yönelik bu tür politikaların uygulanması da kamuoyunda çok az itirazla karşılaşmakta ya da hiç karşılaşmamaktadır. Bunun nedeni, hem siyasi hem de kamusal söylemde yüksek vasıflı göçmenlerin sorunsuz, refah sistemlerine yük olmayacak ve sınıfsal statüleri nedeniyle kolayca entegre olabilecek yüksek gelirliler olarak görülmesidir. Ayrıca, çoğu gelişmiş ülkede yaşlanan nüfus ve buna bağlı işgücü açığı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu kişilerin işgücü ve bilgilerinin özellikle bilgi teknolojisi (IT) gibi 'bilgi ekonomisinin' belirli sektörlerinde ekonomik kalkınma için faydalı olduğu düşünülmektedir (Triadafilopoulos & Smith, 2013).

Sonuç olarak, gelişmiş devletler arasında göç politikalarının düşük vasıflı işçiler ve sığınmacılar da dahil olmak üzere belirli göçmen türlerinin girişini kısıtlayacak şekilde tasarlandığı, ancak aynı zamanda yüksek vasıflı göçmenler için uygun ve çekici göç düzenlemeleri sunulduğu küresel bir eğilim ortaya çıkmıştır (Czaika & de Haas, 2017, s. 896). Sánchez-Montijano ve diğerlerine (2018, s. 3) göre göçmenleri ev sahibi topluma katkılarına göre değerlendiren bu liberal mantık, "göçmenleri becerileri, eğitimleri, menşe ülkeleri ve ev sahibi ülkelere katkıları açısından ayrımcılığa tabi tutmaktadır".

Göç alan ülkelerin vasıflı göçmenleri çekme ve elde tutma politikalarının verimliliğine odaklanan araştırmalar, göçmenlerin eylemliliğini ve karar verme sürecine dâhil olan faktörlerin çok boyutluluğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Yüksek vasıflı göçmenleri hedefleyen herhangi bir ülkenin çekiciliğini etkileyen bu göstergelerin yalnızca ekonomik faktörlere dayanmadığı, aynı zamanda entegrasyon ve kapsayıcılıkla ilgili faktörleri de içerdiği tespit edilmiştir. Örneğin prosedürlerin kolaylığı, daimi ikamet için hızlı yollar, vatandaşlık, vergi oranı, cinsiyet eşitliği, ortak uluslararası dilin yaygın kullanımı, aile birleşimi ve göçmen dostu sosyal iklim.

Yüksek vasıflı göçmenlerin küresel işgücü piyasalarındaki avantajlı konumlarına ilişkin kamusal söylemler ve gelişmiş ülkelerin küresel yeteneklerin bu yarıştan en iyi şekilde yararlanmaları için giderek daha cazip fırsatlar sunuyor gibi gösterilmesi, yüksek vasıflıların hareketlilik fırsatlarının ve işgücü piyasasına entegrasyonunun her zaman sorunsuz bir süreç olduğuna dair genel bir varsayım yaratmaktadır. Ancak, daha önce de ele alındığı üzere, yüksek vasıflılar da dahil olmak üzere bireylerin hareketliliği küresel güç ilişkilerinden muaf değildir (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Salazar, 2021). Geri dönmek veya başka bir yere taşınmak gibi daha fazla hareketlilik fırsatına erişim genellikle kişinin pasaportunun sunduğu olanaklara bağlıdır (Weinar & Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020). Zhan ve Zhou (2020), yüksek vasıflı göçmenlerin heterojen bir grup oluşturduğunu ve göçmenlerin sosyoekonomik durumuna, göç ülkedeki göç rejimine ve göç veren ülkenin gelişmişliğine bağlı olarak istihdamla ilgili ve/veya yerleşimle ilgili gibi farklı hareketsizlik biçimleriyle karşılaşabileceğini göstererek bu konuya dikkat çeken araştırmacılar arasında yer almaktadır.

Bu nedenle, insan hareketliliği kavramının, içerdiği eşitsizlikler ve karmaşıklıklar nedeniyle diğer hareketlilik türlerinden ayrıldığı ve bu nedenle hareketsizliğin sorgulanması gereken bir araştırma alanı haline geldiği savunulmaktadır (Bélanger & Silvey, 2020). Hareketlilik ve hareketsizliği iki ayrı, ikili kavram olmaktan ziyade, gerçek yaşam durumlarında sıklıkla iç içe geçebilen durumlardır (Bélanger ve Silvey, 2020; Salazar, 2021; Schewel, 2019). Hareketsizlik, hareket halindeki göçmenler tarafından deneyimlenebileceği gibi, göç etmeyi arzulayan ancak bunu yapamayan göçmen olmayanlar tarafından da deneyimlenebilmektedir (Carling, 2002). Bu tezde bu perspektiften yararlanarak hareketlilik ve hareketsizlik durumları bir arada göz önünde bulundurulmaya çalışılacaktır.

Yüksek vasıflı göç üzerine yapılan son dönem araştırmalara bakacak olursak, ortaya çıkan en görünür gruplardan birinin Avrupa'nın doğu ve güney çeperlerinden kaynaklanan genç ve eğitimli göçmenlerin yeni Avrupa içi hareketlilikleri olduğu görülecektir. King (2018), Avrupa göç sistemindeki kaynak ülkelerin sayısının ve çeşitliliğinin artmasıyla tanımlanan Avrupa'daki yeni göç dönemini anlamada üç önemli olayın önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bunlar Demir Perde'nin kalkması, 2000'li yıllardaki Avrupa Birliği (AB) genişlemeleri ve 2008 küresel finansal krizleridir. AB entegrasyon sürecindeki bu gelişmeler bir yandan Orta ve Doğu Avrupa ülkelerindeki nüfusun serbest dolaşımına izin vererek Doğu-Batı göçlerinin önündeki yapısal engelleri ortadan kaldırmış, diğer yandan da özellikle Avrupalı gençler arasında yeni deneyimler ve genişleyen fırsatlar için göç ve hareketliliğe değer veren genel bir anlayışa yol açmıştır.

Türkiye'den yüksek vasıflı göç konusu ise 1960'lardan başlayarak çeşitli akademik yayınlarda incelenmiştir. Ancak bu konu, 1960'lı ve 1970'i yıllarda Avrupa'ya, özellikle de misafir işçi programları kapsamında Almanya'ya yönelen işgücü göçü ile meşgul olması nedeniyle Türkiye'deki göç literatürünün çok küçük bir bölümünü oluşturmuştur. Türkiye, ekonomik canlanma sırasında Avrupa'ya göçmen işçi gönderen başlıca ülkelerden biriydi, ancak Avrupa'ya giden yüksek vasıflı göçmenlerin menşe ülkeleri arasında Türkiye'nin payı oldukça düşüktür. Türkiye'den yurtdışına giden vasıflı göçmenlerin çoğu Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Kanada'da ikamet etmektedir (Elveren, 2018). Türkiye'den yüksek vasıflı göçle

ilgili literatür incelendiğinde, akademik çalışmaların öncelikle Kuzey Amerika'ya, özellikle de Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ne odaklandığı görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte, Türkiye'den yüksek vasıflı göçle ilgili daha yakın tarihli çalışmalar, göçmen profilinin son birkaç on yılda vasıfsız veya yarı vasıflı işgücü göçünden yüksek vasıflı göçe kayması nedeniyle giderek Avrupa'ya odaklanmaya başlamıştır. 2000'li yılların başından itibaren, birçok Avrupa ülkesinin Avrupa dışından yüksek vasıflı bireylere yönelik cazip göç politikaları uygulayarak yetenek rekabetine girmesiyle, Türkiye'den yüksek vasıflı göç akışı Kuzey Amerika'nın yanı sıra Avrupa'yı da kapsayacak şekilde yayılmıştır. Son dönemdeki araştırmaların temel sorularından biri, bu 'yeni' göçmenlerin kendilerini nasıl tanımladıkları, Avrupa'daki mevcut göçmen topluluklarından nasıl farklılaştıkları ve ev sahibi toplum tarafından nasıl algılandıkları olmuştur. Türkiye'den yüksek vasıflı göçü ele alan literatür, sadece beşeri sermaye ve ekonomik odaklı olmaktan çıkıp, kültürel ve siyasi hususları ve yeni göçmenlerin ev sahibi toplumlardaki kimlik inşasını da içermeye başlamıştır. 'Yeni' göçmenlerin kendilerini 'eski' göçmenlerden farklılaştırma yolları, Türkiye'den önceki on yıllarda işgücü göçü yaşamış Avrupa ülkelerine olan yüksek vasıflı bireylerin göçü arttıkça daha görünür hale gelmiştir. Bu olgu, birçok akademik ve akademik olmayan yayında "yeni dalga" göç olarak kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Türkmen (2019), Almanya'daki yüksek vasıflı göçmenler üzerine yaptığı çalışmada, son yıllarda Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya giden göçmenlerin sosyo-ekonomik profilindeki dramatik değişikliklere dikkat çekerek, yeni göçmenlerin önceki göçmen gruplarına kıyasla daha yüksek eğitim seviyelerine sahip olduğunu ve İstanbul, İzmir ve Ankara gibi büyük şehirlerdeki kentsel kökenden geldiklerini belirtmektedir. Çalışma ayrıca, bu grubun hem Almanya/Avrupa'daki Türk nüfusundan hem de Türkiye'deki çoğunluk nüfusundan eğitim geçmişi, dini inançlar/uygulamalar ve yaşam tarzı açısından önemli ölçüde farklılaştığına işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışma, ev sahibi toplumdaki basmakalıp Türklük imajına uymayan bu "yeni dalga" göçmenlerin Almanya ve Avrupa'da kök salmaya başladığını göstermektedir.

Bir dizi akademik çalışmada gösterildiği üzere, Türkiye'nin değişen siyasi ve sosyal yapısı, ülke giderek daha otoriter ve muhafazakâr bir rejime doğru kayarken, yüksek vasıflı bireylerin göç ve geri dönmeme kararlarını etkileyen önemli bir faktör

olmuştur. Elveren ve Toksöz (Elveren, 2018; Elveren & Toksöz, 2017), bu ilişkinin özellikle Türkiye'de genişleyen toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizlikleri ve yüksek vasıflı kadınların göç kararı üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koyan akademisyenler arasındadır. Yazarlar, olağanüstü hal altında gerçekleşen 2017 anayasa referandumunu da işaret ederek, Türkiye'deki rejimin laik ve demokratik karakterinin son on yılda bozulmasının, eğitimli ve yüksek vasıflı olanlar da dahil olmak üzere laik bireylerin Türkiye'den önemli ölçüde göç etmesine yol açtığını öne sürmektedir.

Bu bölümde, hem sermayenin hem de emeğin hareketli olduğu daha geniş bir küresel bağlamda çağrı merkezi işinin ekonomi politiğini ve Balkanlar ve Yunanistan'da ortaya çıkışı ele alınmaktadır.

Çağrı merkezi işi, tipik olarak hizmet sektöründe, gelişen bilgi ve iletişim teknolojileri (ICT) ile mümkün hale gelen beyaz yakalı bir iş kolu olarak tanımlanabilir. Öncelikle telefon, e-posta, mesajlaşma ve son zamanlarda sosyal medya dahil olmak üzere çeşitli elektronik ortamlar aracılığıyla maddi olmayan hizmetler sunar. Ayrıca, çalışan, ürün ve müşterinin farklı fiziksel konumlarda bulunabilmesiyle diğer hizmet sektörü iş kollarından ayrılır (Burgess & Connell, 2006; Stevens, 2014). Coğrafi uzaklığa rağmen hizmetlerin sunulmasının mümkün kılınması, bu sektörü temel işgücü ve kurumsal maliyetleri azaltmak amacıyla dış kaynak kullanımı ve taşeronluk için en uygun sektörlerden biri haline getirmiştir. Sonuç olarak, gerekli altyapının ve yeterli sayıda kalifiye personelin mevcut olması durumunda, çağrı merkezi faaliyetleri yalnızca ilgili kuruluşun dışına taşınmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda dünya çapında herhangi bir yere de gönderilebilir. Hindistan ve Filipinler de dahil olmak üzere çağrı merkezi endüstrisinin yaygın imajı, farklı zaman dilimlerinde, uzak yerlerde İngilizce konuşan müşterilere yanıt veren, kulaklıklı kabinlerde genç, gülümseyen çalışanlar ile tasvir edilmektedir. Bu temsil, yukarıda açıklanan hizmet işinin ekonomik ve örgütsel yeniden yapılandırma sürecinin bir sonucudur.

Sömürge tarihi ve diğer ilişkilere bağlı olarak İngilizce gibi dillerde büyük pazarlar için çağrı merkezi işgücünün küresel dağılımı yaygın olarak gözlemlense de bu durum elbette her dil için geçerli değildir. Son zamanlarda, Avrupa'nın

periferisindeki bir dizi bölge, bilgi temelli ekonomide belirli görev ve hizmetler için yabancı sermaye yatırımı için cazip alanlar olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. İngilizce olmayan müşteri hizmetleri çağrı merkezlerinin taşınmasında, Bulgaristan ve Romanya gibi Balkan ülkelerine yatırım eğilimi giderek artmaktadır. Todorova (2018) tarafından gösterildiği üzere, Alman ve Hollandalı yatırımcılar gibi Anglofon olmayan Avrupa sermayeleri, Batı ve Kuzey Avrupa'ya coğrafi, kültürel ve dilsel yakınlıkta bulunan bölgenin çok dilli, iyi eğitimli, düşük ücretli yetenek havuzundan yararlanmak için Balkanlar'daki sosyalizm sonrası ülkelere taşınma girişimlerinde bulunmaktadırlar. Aynı zaman dilimlerinde bulunma ve paylaşılan Avrupa kültürü ve değerlerinin yanı sıra AB ve/veya Kuzey Atlantik Antlaşması Örgütü (NATO) üyesi olmanın getirdiği siyasi istikrar, yabancı yatırımları çekmiş ve bunun sonucunda bilişim ve yazılım geliştirme sektörlerinde, özellikle de müşteri hizmetleri ve arka ofis işlerinde üretim ve işgücünde özelleşmiş bölgeler yaratmıştır. Bu belirli sektörlerde Balkanlar'a yabancı yatırım sermayesi girişi, bölgenin küresel ekonomiye ve AB pazarlarına nasıl dahil olduğunu göstermekte ve aynı zamanda çağdaş kapitalizmdeki dönüşümlere de işaret etmektedir.

Yunanistan, küresel çağrı merkezi endüstrisi için Avrupa periferisindeki bir diğer destinasyondur. Koskina'nın (2006) belirttiği gibi, çağrı merkezi sektörü Yunanistan'da özellikle telekomünikasyon, bankacılık ve sigortacılık sektörlerinde gelişen bir endüstriyi temsil etmektedir. Bu durum özellikle çağrı merkezlerinde istihdamın hızla arttığı Atina'da öne çıkmaktadır. Ekonomik durgunluk ve kronik genç işsizliği nedeniyle çoğunlukla herhangi bir ikinci dili akıcı bir şekilde konuşabilen vasıflı ve eğitimli iş gücü göz önüne alındığında, dış kaynak hizmet operasyonları yürüten çok uluslu şirketler için burası ideal bir lokasyondur. Ayrıca, AB ile kıyaslandığında düşük işgücü ve altyapı maliyetlerinin önemli hususlar olduğu düşünülmektedir. Avrupa ve Batı pazarlarına coğrafi ve kültürel yakınlık, müşterilerle benzer zaman dilimlerini paylaşmak, Hollanda, Almanya veya İngiltere'deki sermaye merkezleri için Yunanistan'ın hizmet tedariği için çekiciliğini arttırmaktadır. Yunanistan'ın cazip özellikleri, bilgi tabanlı ekonominin belirli sektörlerinde çok uluslu şirketlerin yabancı yatırımlarını çekmek için hükümet organları ve kurumları tarafından da aktif olarak teşvik edilmektedir. Yunanistan'da gelişmekte olan çağrı merkezleri anadilleri için hizmet verecek göçmen işgücünden

de yararlanmaktadır. Ancak, Yunanista'da halihazırda ikamet eden göçmen stokuna ek olarak, burada bulunan çağrı merkezi şirketlerinin potansiyel başvuru sahiplerine cömert transfer paketleri ve sponsorluk planları sunarak yurtdışından işe alım için reklam yaptıkları da gözlemlenmektedir. Yunan devleti tarafından sunulan yabancı yatırım teşvik çerçevesi, ilgili şirketler tarafından işe alınacak yabancı personel için oturma ve çalışma izinlerinin verilmesini kolaylaştırmakta ve yatırımcıları çekmek için özellikle vurgulanan bir nokta olmaktadır (Enterprise Greece, 2018, s. 11). Dolayısıyla bu durumda, Yunanistan'dan çok dilli hizmet faaliyetleri yürüten ulusötesi çağrı merkezlerinin büyük ölçüde göçmen işgücüne dayandığı, hatta farklı ülke ve konumlardan Yunanistan'a bir göç akımı yarattığı söylenebilir. Bu durumda Yunanistan'a yapılan sermaye yatırımının, çeşitli dil becerilerine sahip yabancı işgücünü çekmek için konumundan stratejik olarak yararlandığı da görülmektedir. Avrupa, Afrika, Orta Doğu ve Asya'nın kesişme noktasında yer alan Yunanistan'ın farklı lokasyonlara yakınlığı ve Akdeniz'de yer alan bir ülke olması, olası yabancı başvuru sahiplerine yaşam tarzı göçünde (Benson & O'Reilly, 2016) ve dijital göçebelerde (Cook, 2022) olduğu gibi güneşli ve sıcak bir iklimde belirli bir çalışma ve yaşama fırsatı sunmaktadır. Atina, uluslararası çağrı merkezi şirketlerinin, Yunanistan'da Türkiye Cumhuriyeti vatandaşları da dâhil olmak üzere dünyanın dört bir yanından gelen göçmenleri ve çok dilli personeli istihdam ettikleri tesisleri açmayı tercih ettikleri başlıca bölgedir. Bu şirketler arasında en tipik ve tanınmış olanlardan biri, küresel müşterileri için dış kaynak hizmetleri sunan çok uluslu bir firma, 9.000 çalışanının yarısından fazlasının yurtdışından geldiğini (Yannoulatou, 2019), 40'tan fazla dil ve lehçede çalıştıklarını ve yüzden fazla milletten insanı istihdam ettiklerini belirtmektedir. Atina'daki çağrı merkezlerinde istihdam edilen işgücünün çok kültürlü yapısı, özellikle Kallithea, Tavros ve Piraeus gibi şirket binalarının da bulunduğu şehrin belirli bölgelerinde daha belirgindir, özellikle de iş çıkış saatlerinde bazı kafe ve barlar İngilizce konuşan kalabalıklarla dolmakta ve bu da mahallelerin karakterinde gözle görülür bir değişikliğe sebep olmaktadır. Güneydoğu Avrupa'da yer alan bir başkent olan Atina, Türkiye'den gelen yüksek eğitimli göçmenlerin iş fırsatı ve sözleşmesi ile hareketliliğini kolaylaştıran, yükselen ulusötesi çağrı merkezleri bağlamında hem sermaye hem de insan hareketliliğinin gözlemlenebildiği bir kavşak olması nedeniyle bu çalışmanın ana sahasını oluşturmaktadır. Bu özel araştırma konumu, Avrupa ekonomisinin periferisinde

neoliberal yeniden yapılanmayı, küresel kapitalizmin genişlemesini ve göç arasındaki ilişkileri gösteren mükemmel bir resim sunmaktadır.

Bu araştırmanın ana saha çalışması, Ekim 2021 ile Şubat 2022 arasındaki dönemde Yunanistan'ın başkenti Atina'da gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu araştırmada, göçmenlerin göç motivasyonlarını, stratejilerini ve süreçlerini, bu deneyimlerin dinamik doğası içinde, ev sahibi ülke bağlamında ayrıntılı bir şekilde anlamak amacıyla nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Verilerin temel kaynağı saha araştırmasına dayanmaktadır. Saha araştırması, araştırmacının insanları doğal ortamlarında gözlemlediği, etkileşime girdiği ve kaydettiği birkaç aydan birkaç yıla kadar uzun bir süre boyunca küçük bir grup üzerinde etnografik vaka çalışmaları yürütme pratiğini oluşturan nitel bir araştırma şeklidir (Neuman, 2014, s. 51). Nitel yöntemler esnek araştırma stratejisi ve çeşitli araştırma tekniklerinin kullanılmasına olanak sağladığından, saha çalışması boyunca katılımcı gözlem, mülakat, sözlü tarih ve odak grup bir arada kullanılmıştır.

Sahaya girmeden önce, saha çalışmasının zaman çerçevesi planlanmış ve saha hakkında internet ve gazete makalelerinden YouTube videolarına kadar çeşitli kaynaklardan bilgi toplanmıştır. Ayrıca sosyal medyadan da yararlanılmış, "Atina'da Yaşayan Türkler" adlı bir Facebook grubu da saha ve araştırmanın potansiyel katılımcıları hakkında faydalı bilgiler sağlamıştır. Grup üyelerinin çevrimiçi etkileşimlerini, günlük kaygılarını ve pratiklerini kendi bakış açılarından gözlemlemek, saha ortamına aşina olmayı kolaylaştırmıştır. Sahaya çıkmadan önce, Atina'daki çağrı merkezinde iş deneyimi olan katılımcılarla (biri hala orada çalışmakta ve Atina'da yaşamakta, diğeri ise Atina'daki çağrı merkezinde üç yıl çalıştıktan sonra başka bir Avrupa ülkesine göç etmiş) iki çevrimiçi görüşmeyi (sahadan 4 ay ve 2 ay önce) içeren bir pilot çalışma gerçekleştirilmiştir. Pilot çalışmalar, asıl çalışmanın fizibilitesini ve mülakat tasarımı gibi araştırma araçlarının uygunluğunu test etmek amacıyla ana çalışmaya hazırlık olarak yürütülen küçük ölçekli versiyonlardır (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

Bu araştırmada örnekleme, amaçlı örnekleme nosyonu etrafında şekillenmiştir. Amaçlı örnekleme, nitel araştırmalarda çalışma evrenini seçmek için yaygın olarak

kullanılan ve olasılıklı olmayan bir örnekleme türüdür (Ritchie vd., 2003, s. 78). Bu araştırmada katılımcılar, vize sponsorluğu yoluyla Türkiye Cumhuriyeti vatandaşlarına hareketlilik sağlayan ulusötesi bir çağrı merkezi şirketinin işe alım programının bir parçası olarak Türkiye'den Atina, Yunanistan'a göç etmiş olmak gibi belirli bir deneyimi paylaşma kriterine göre amaçlı olarak seçilmiştir. Bu deneyim, örneklemin çekildiği çalışma evrenini tanımlamıştır. Katılımcılara sahada kartopu örnekleme tekniği ile ulaşılmıştır. Kartopu örnekleme, örnekleme kriterlerini karşılayan potansiyel katılımcıların birbirleriyle iletişim ağı içinde olduğu durumlarda kullanışlı bir örnekleme yöntemi olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Bu yaklaşımın kullanılması, farklı kaynaklardan yeni katılımcıların belirlenmesini kolaylaştırırken, referans sistemi de araştırmacı ile katılımcılar arasında güven tesis edilmesine hizmet etmektedir. Tanımlanan evrenin sınırları dahilinde örneklem, çeşitliliği mümkün olduğunca tam olarak yansıtacak şekilde tasarlanmıştır. Bunu sağlamak için katılımcıların seçimi, özellikle de cinsiyet dengesi araştırma boyunca dikkatle izlenmiştir. Sahaya girişim Atina'daki Panteion Üniversitesi Sosyal Antropoloji Bölümü'nde doktora saha çalışmaları için tasarlanan Erasmus değişim öğrenciliği fırsatından yararlanarak olmuştur. Bu program, öğrenim vizesi ve yasal oturma izni, üniversite bağlantısı, üniversite tesislerine erişim ve akademik danışmanlık gibi bir dizi önemli kolaylık sağlamıştır. Sahaya girişin ardından, potansiyel katılımcılara ilk erişim, araştırmacının arkadaşı olan ve son üç yıldır Atina'daki çağrı merkezi şirketinde çalışan kilit konumdaki bekçi tarafından sağlanmıştır "Bekçi" terimi, araştırmacıların sahaya erişimine aracılık etmekten sorumlu bir kişiyi ifade etmek için kullanılmıştır.

Saha çalışması sırasında araştırmacı olarak benim rolüm, "katılımcı gözlemci" şeklindeydi. Bernard'a (2006) göre bu yöntemin bilimsel araştırmalardaki karşılaştırmalı avantajlarından biri geçerliliği arttırmasıdır çünkü araştırmacıya başka yollarla elde edilmesi neredeyse hayal bile edilemeyecek her türlü mahrem veriyi gözlemleme ve toplama imkanı verir. Ayrıca, araştırmacının insanlar arasındaki varlığının, insanların araştırmacıya duydukları güvende belirgin bir artışa yol açtığı, öyle ki insanların davranışlarını değiştirmeden günlük işlerine ve etkileşimlerine devam ettikleri görülmüştür. Bu rahatsız etmeme etkisinin tepkisellikte belirgin bir azalmaya yol açtığı ve böylece daha fazla geçerlilik sağladığı gösterilmiştir.

Araştırmacının erişimi sahada yeni ağlar ve yeni katılımcılarla sürekli olarak müzakere edilse de bu araştırmada işbirliği neredeyse her durumda sorunsuz bir şekilde inşa edilmiştir. Bu durumun iki olası açıklaması vardır. Birincisi, araştırma hedefleri genellikle araştırma katılımcıları tarafından değerli ve önemli bulunmuş, bu da çalışmaya katkıda bulunma isteklerini artırmıştır. İkincisi, araştırmacı ve katılımcılar arasında temel sosyo-demografik özelliklerin yanı sıra kültürel geçmiş ve deneyimlerin bazı yönleri açısından oldukça büyük bir benzerlik olmasıdır. Bu ortak özelliklerin varlığı, erişimi kolaylaştırdığı, sosyal ilişkilerin gelişmesini teşvik ettiği ve katılımcılarla güven tesis edilmesine zemin hazırladığı için veri toplama açısından avantajlı olmuştur. Ayrıca, bu özellikler araştırmacının saha ortamına daha fazla dahil olmasını sağlamıştır.

Sahaya girdikten ve bekçilerinin yardımıyla erişim sağladıktan sonra, araştırmacı rolüne ek olarak, katılımcılar ve araştırmacı arasında devam eden etkileşimin bir sonucu olarak sahada başka bir sosyal rol daha atanmış ve benimsenmiştir. Bu sosyal rol, araştırmacının konumunun bir arkadaş, yeni gelen, geçici ikamet eden, katılımcıların Atina'daki yaşamını keşfetmek isteyen, aynı zamanda bu yeni şehirde rehberliğe ve arkadaşlığa ihtiyaç duyan ve araştırması için yardıma ihtiyaç duyan meraklı bir ziyaretçi arasında gidip gelmiştir. Bu roller arasındaki dengeyi korumak için sahada iki temel strateji kullanılmıştır. Öncelikle, bir beceri olarak 'takılma' pratiğinden yararlanılmıştır. Bu, sahaya girildiğinde aynı anda aşırı sayıda soru sormaktan kaçınmayı gerektirdiği için bir beceri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bunun yerine, 'takılma' eylemi yakınlık kurulmasını teşvik etmekte ve böylece araştırmayla ilgili birçok konunun günlük konuşmalar bağlamında, araştırmacının huzurunda tartışılmasını kolaylaştırmaktadır. Buna ek bir beceri teşkil eden ikinci strateji ise kendini bir 'acemi', yani öğrenmeye ilgi duyan ve saha araştırması için mevcut olan sınırlı sürede daha fazla insanla tanışmak için yardıma ihtiyacı olan biri olarak sunmaktır. Sahadaki bu iki sosyal konumu sürdürmenin bir sonucu olarak, sahanın birçok üyesi tarafından çeşitli sosyal etkinliklere davet edilmiş ve veri toplama fırsatı elde edilmiştir.

Sahada bulunulan süre boyunca katılımcılarla toplam 31 derinlemesine mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Derinlemesine mülakatlar yarı yapılandırılmış formatta

hazırlanmış ve uygulanmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerde araştırmacı ve katılımcı birebir etkileşim içerisindedir. Görüşmeler, sohbeti andıran görece gayri resmi bir atmosferde gerçekleştirilir. Görüşmeci sorularını tematik olarak kategorize eder ve veri toplama sürecini yapılandırmak için alt başlıklar oluşturur. Bu alt başlıklar dahilinde, ele alınan konular tartışılır. Sorulan sorular açık uçlu niteliktedir. Görüşme formu, her biri üç ila on açık uçlu soru içeren beş alt başlığa ayrılmıştır. İlk alt başlık yaş, cinsiyet, doğum yeri, eğitim durumu ve mesleki deneyim gibi demografik bilgileri içeren yaşam öyküsüne ayrılmıştır. İkinci alt başlık göç süreciyle ilgilidir. Görüşmenin ilk iki bölümünde biyografik ve öyküsel bir yaklaşım benimsenerek görüşülen kişilerde rahatlık ve konfor hissi yaratılması amaçlanmıştır. Üçüncü bölüm bir çağrı merkezinde çalışma ve istihdam konusuyla ilgiliyken, 'Yunanistan'da Yaşam' başlıklı dördüncü bölüm göç ülkesindeki sosyal ilişkileri ve günlük yaşamı incelemektedir. Son bölüm ise gelecek beklentilerini tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Mülakat soru formunun son hali ekler bölümünde hem Türkçe hem de İngilizce olarak yer almaktadır.

Her görüşmeden önce, katılımcılara araştırma sürecini, etik prosedürleri, katılımlarının getireceği etkileri, araştırmanın doğasını, gizlilik ve anonimlikle ilgili konuları açıklayan bir "Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu" verilmiştir. Ses kayıt cihazı kullanmak için izin alınmış ve tüm görüşmeler ses kaydına alınmış ve yazıya dökülmüştür. Saha çalışması sırasında ayrıca görüşmelerin ve gözlemlerin ayrıntılı anlatımlarının kaydedildiği saha notları tutulmuştur. Tüm görüşme verilerinin yazıya dökülmesinin ardından, gömülü teori yaklaşımına uygun olarak metnin derinlemesine okunması yapılmıştır. Bu, potansiyel temaları belirlemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Temaların belirlenmesi, deşifre edilen görüşme verilerinin titizlikle yeniden okunması, önemli bölümlerin vurgulanması ve kodlama sürecine ilişkin notlar alınması yoluyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Transkripsiyonlu metin verilerini okurken devam eden bu belgeleme süreci, veri analizi sürecinde yoğun olarak kullanılan bir teknik olan 'not alma' (Bernard, 2006) olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Daha sonra, ortaya çıkan kategorilerden elde edilen veriler, karşılaştırma yapmak ve aralarındaki bağlantıları değerlendirmek amacıyla bir araya getirilmiştir. Veri analizi sürecinin son aşaması, bulguların görüşmelerden alıntılar şeklinde sunulması için açıklayıcı örneklerin kullanılmasını içermektedir. Saha araştırmasının son

aşamasında, görüşmelerin yeni bilgiler üretmediği ve yanıtların ve kavramların kendilerini tekrar ettiği görülmüştür. Bu teorik doygunluk noktasına ulaşıldığında, bu doygunluğu doğrulamak ve ön bulguları ortaya çıkan kavram ve kategorileri analiz etmek amacıyla bir odak grup görüşmesi yapılmasına karar verilmiştir. Yaklaşık iki yıldır Atina'da çağrı merkezinde çalışan ikisi erkek, biri kadın üç arkadaşla yapılan odak grubu görüşmesinde amaç, tamamlanan mülakatlardan ortaya çıkan kavram ve kategorilere katılımcıların tepkisini gözlemlemek ve üçgenleme uygulaması yapmanın bir yolu olarak görüş ve deneyimlerin açık bir şekilde paylaşılmasını kolaylaştırmak olmuştur. Saha çalışmasının son aşamasında, Atina şehir merkezindeki bir barın ortak sahibi olan bir kilit kişi ile derinlemesine mülakat şeklinde ek bir veri toplama yöntemi uygulanmıştır. Bu işletme Türkiye'den gelen siyasi göçmenler tarafından işletilmektedir ve çağrı merkezi çalışanları ile Türkiye'den gelen diğer göçmenlerin vakit geçirdiği popüler bir yer olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu kilit bilgilendirici ile yapılan görüşme, durumu mahallenin yerel bakış açısından dinlemeyi ve ortak bir sosyalleşme alanı aracılığıyla bir göçmen topluluğunun nasıl inşa edildiğini gözlemlemeyi amaçlamıştır.

Sahaya girdiğim andan itibaren etik, araştırma sürecinin merkezinde yer almıştır. Katılımcıların yaptıkları işin ayrıntılarını konuşmakta tereddüt ettikleri gözlemlenmiştir. Çağrı merkezi sektöründe gizlilik ve veri korumanın önemi ve büyük şirketler için taşeron olarak çalıştıkları ve gizlilik anlaşmalarına bağlı oldukları gerçeği göz önüne alındığında, bu konudaki çekinceleri anlaşılabilir bulunmuştur. Akademik formasyonum, Ruane'nin (2005, s. 17) "planlamadan sonuçların açıklanmasına kadar verdiğimiz her araştırma kararı etik göz önünde bulundurularak verilmelidir" diyerek belirttiği gibi, araştırma etiğinin nihai olarak araştırmacıya ait olduğunu vurguladığından, bu konuya hassasiyetle yaklaştım. Sonuç olarak, çalışmamın odağını emek sürecinden uzaklaştırarak ve yalnızca göç ve göçmenlik deneyimlerine odaklanacak şekilde yeniden düzenledim. Katılımcıları her türlü zarardan korumak, araştırma etiğinin temel bir ilkesidir ve bu kapsamda işlerini kaybetme veya yasal işlem riski de buna dahildir. Bunu göz önünde bulundurarak, gizlilik ve anonimliğe daha da fazla önem verdim ve bu hususların titizlikle korunmasını sağladım. Bu etik sorumluluğun bir parçası olarak, veri toplama yöntemi olarak görsel sosyolojiden feragat etmeye karar verdim.

Bu bölümde, Türkiye'den göç etmek için belirli çıkış stratejilerini kullanan bir küme olarak bu araştırmanın katılımcılarının profilini tanımlamak amaçlanmaktadır. Birincil amaç, bu grup içinde var olabilecek örüntüleri sistematik olarak tanımlamak ve analiz etmektir. Bu sayede, Türkiye'den çıkış stratejisi olarak bu özel yolu izleyen ve bu hareketlilik yoluyla küresel işgücü piyasasının bir parçası olan bu grubun aktörlerinin özelliklerini ayırt etmek ve bu aktörler hakkında içgörü kazanmak da mümkün hale gelecektir.

Katılımcıların demografik bilgileri yaş, cinsiyet, eğitim (en son aldıkları derece), Türkiye'de en son ikamet ettikleri şehir, medeni durum ve görüşme tarihi itibariyle Yunanistan'da ikamet süresini içermektedir. Katılımcıların yaş aralığı 25 ile 44 arasında olup ortalaması 31, medyanı ise 30'dur. Dolayısıyla, bu kümenin ağırlıklı olarak görüşmelerin yapıldığı dönemde yirmili yaşlarının sonlarında ve otuzlu yaşlarının başlarında olan genç bireylerden oluştuğu sonucuna varılabilir. Bu vakadaki katılımcıların yaş dağılımı ulusal göç eğilimleriyle uyumludur. Toplam 31 katılımcının 16'sı kadın, 15'i erkektir. Örneklem, sahada sayısal olarak baskın bir cinsiyet gözlemlenmediği için tüm cinsiyetlerin eşit temsili hedeflenerek oluşturulmuştur. Buna ek olarak, katılımcılar arasında ikisi eşcinsel erkek ve biri biseksüel kadın olmak üzere üç açık LGBT birey bulunmaktadır. LGBT bireylerin örnekleme dahil edilmesi amaçlı değil, kümenin özelliğinin doğal bir sonucudur. Bu durum, katılımcılarla ve diğer kilit katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmelerde de birkaç kez dile getirilmiştir. Katılımcıların eğitim seviyeleri, Türkiye'den önceki işgücü göçü akımlarının eğitim seviyelerine ve Türkiye'deki nüfusun genel eğitim seviyesine kıyasla yüksek kabul edilmektedir. Bu araştırmada yer alan katılımcıların tamamı yükseköğretime girmiş, 5'i ise okulu bırakmıştır. Toplamda, 31 katılımcının 26'sı yükseköğrenim mezunudur; 18'i lisans, 4'ü yüksek lisans ve 4'ü ön lisans diplomasına sahiptir. Ön lisans ve lisans dereceleri tüm katılımcılarda Türkiye'deki bir üniversiteden alınmıştır. Yüksek lisans durumunda, 2 katılımcı derecelerini Türkiye dışında, Avrupa'da bulunan üniversitelerden almışlardır. Ayrıca, 18 lisans mezunu arasından 4'ü Türkiye'de ya da yurtdışında yüksek lisans eğitimine başlamış ancak mezuniyet gerekliliklerini yerine getirememiştir. Tamamlanmış olsun ya da olmasın bu durum, bu kümenin eğitim yoluyla beşeri sermayelerini geliştirmeye ve uluslararası arenada deneyim kazanmaya olan ilgisini göstermektedir. Buna ek

olarak, tüm katılımcılar en az orta düzeyde İngilizce bilmektedir. İngilizce dil becerilerinin edinimi katılımcıların kişisel geçmişlerine göre değişmektedir; bazıları özel okullar ve kurslar aracılığıyla daha erken yaşlarda başlamıştır, ancak çoğu için temel dayanak kişisel çabalar ve yurtdışında geçirilen zamanla desteklenen lise ve üniversite eğitimidir. Araştırmada yer alan katılımcıların tamamı kentsel arka plana sahiptir, Türkiye'deki büyükşehir merkezlerinde doğmuş ya da büyümüşlerdir. Toplanan veriler aynı zamanda katılımcıların göç etmeden önce yaşadıkları son şehir hakkında da bilgi vermektedir ve bu şehirler ağırlıklı olarak Türkiye'nin batısındaki büyük metropollerdir: 16'sı İzmir'den, 7'si İstanbul'dan ve 3'ü Bursa'dandır. Katılımcılar arasında Yunanistan'a uluslararası göçten önce eğitim, iş ya da mezuniyet sonrası memleketlerine geri dönmek amacıyla gerçekleşen iç göç yaygındır. Katılımcıların medeni durumları göz önüne alındığında, bu hareketin büyük ölçüde bireysel bir göç olduğu görülmektedir. Sunulan demografik veriler, göç kararında yaşam seyri aşamalarının önemine işaret etmektedir. Eğitimden ayrılma, mezuniyet, işgücü piyasasına giriş, işsizlik, boşanma, iş değiştirme, şehir değiştirme, yurtdışı deneyimi gibi önemli olaylarla beraber yaşamlarında geçiş dönemleri yaşayan bir grup söz konusudur. Bekar, çocuksuz, oturmuş bir kariyeri olmayan ancak belirli eğitim ve dil becerilerine sahip genç yetişkinlerden oluşan bu grubun yaşam döngüsünde belirli noktalarda bulunmaları ve Türkiye'deki tatmin edici olmayan koşulları terk ederek yurtdışında, özellikle de Avrupa'da yaşamı deneyimleme istekleri, geçici iş sözleşmesi ile çağrı merkezinde çalışmayı kabul ederek göç etme kararlarını almalarında etkilidir.

Yurtdışı deneyimlerinin katılımcılar arasında yaygın bir durum olduğu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu deneyimlerin, dünya görüşlerini ve gelecekteki kararlarını da şekillendiren kimlik oluşumlarının önemli bir parçası haline geldiği gözlemlenmiştir. Mülakat verilerinin analizi, bu tür deneyimlerin yaşamlarının bir noktasında yurtdışında yaşama fikri üzerinde derin bir etkisi olduğunu reddedilemez bir şekilde ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcıların üçte ikisinden fazlası (21) ya eğitimleri sırasında ya da daha sonra eğitim, gönüllülük veya iş amacıyla en az bir kez yurtdışı deneyimi yaşamıştır. Bu deneyimler öncelikle Erasmus gibi Avrupa Birliği öğrenci değişim programlarıyla veya yurtdışında yüksek lisans eğitimi ve lisansüstü burslar gibi eğitim amaçlı diğer hareketliliklerle ilgilidir. Diğerleri ise Avrupa Komisyonu

tarafından koordine edilen ve gençlerin Avrupa'da başka bir ülkeye giderek kar amacı gütmeden çalıştıkları uluslararası gençlik gönüllülük programlarına katılımı içermektedir. Burada dikkat çeken bir başka husus da katılımcıların önemli bir kısmının bu tür programlara birden fazla kez katılmış olmasıdır. Atina'ya göç etmeden önceki yurtdışı deneyimi hakkında yapılan görüşmelerin derinlemesine analizi iki önemli sonuca dair ikna edici kanıtlar sunmaktadır. Birincisi, katılımcıların daha önce çeşitli şekillerde yurtdışı deneyimi yaşamış olmaları, yurtdışında yaşamaya yönelik mevcut ilgi, merak ve arzularını açıkça ortaya koymaktadır. İkinci olarak, deneyimin kendisi, çeşitli nedenlerle yurtdışında yaşama fikrini daha da güçlendirmiştir.

Önceki iş deneyimi ve mesleki geçmiş açısından kümede iki tipoloji ortaya çıkmaktadır. Birincisi, öğrenciyken çalıştıkları geçici yarı zamanlı işler, stajlar veya gönüllü çalışmalar dışında daha önce profesyonel bir iş deneyimine sahip olmayanlardır. İkinci grup ise, Türkiye'de ve/veya yurtdışında bir çalışma geçmişine sahip olup göç etme aşamasında ya işsizdir ya da kırılgan konumlarından ve güvencesiz çalışma koşullarından son derece memnuniyetsizdir. Ayrıca, birkaç istisnai durum dışında, birçoğu eğitimlerine uymayan işlerde istihdam edilmiştir. İlginç bir şekilde, daha önce iş deneyimi olan katılımcılar arasında dokuz kişi, yani toplamın neredeyse üçte biri, göç etmeden önce Türkiye'deki çağrı merkezlerinde çalışmıştır. Birçoğu bu tecrübeyi uzun süreli işsizlik veya güvencesiz çalışma dönemlerinden sonra eksik istihdam biçiminde deneyimlemiştir. Özetle, Türkiye işgücü piyasasına hakim olan işsizlik, eksik istihdam ve güvencesiz çalışma koşulları, ister algılanmış ister deneyimlenmiş olsun, göçü tetikleyen en çok belirtilen faktörlerdendir. Göç yoluyla katılımcılar, istenmeyen koşullardan ayrılmayı ve çalışanların haklarını daha iyi koruduğu varsayılan Avrupa çalışma standartları altında çalışarak daha iyi bir iş-yaşam dengesi ve yaşam kalitesi elde etmeyi hedeflemişlerdir.

Görüşme deşifrelerinin veri analizi, Türkiye'de son on yılda hakim olan ve çok sayıda çatışma ve şiddet olayını içeren çoklu kriz ortamının, katılımcıların insan güvenliği konusundaki endişelerini artırdığını ve dolayısıyla göç kararlarını etkilediğini ortaya koymaktadır. Görüşmeler sırasında katılımcıların göç anlatılarında

önemli unsurlar olarak tespit edilen "güvenlik" ve "emniyet" temalarının tekrarlandığı görülmektedir. Fiziksel şiddet olayları ve siyasi çatışmalara ek olarak, günlük yaşamın diğer birçok yönüne nüfuz eden çatışma ortamı da bireyler üzerinde baskı oluşturarak göç kararlarını önemli ölçüde etkilemiştir. İslami ve muhafazakar değerleri ve yaşam tarzlarını teşvik eden Türkiye'nin toplumsal ve siyasi hayatındaki bu değişimler, görüşmelerde gündelik hayatlarına doğrudan müdahale eden bir çatışma kaynağı olarak dile getirilmiştir. Mülakat verileri, özellikle genç ve eğitimli göçmen grubunun demokratik değerleri ve kişisel özgürlükleri benimsediğini ve Türkiye'deki mevcut sosyal ve siyasi ortam nedeniyle kendilerini tehdit altında hissettiklerini göstermektedir. Son olarak, Türkiye'deki en önemli toplumsal sorunlardan biri olan toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği ve kadına yönelik şiddetin, her iki cinsiyetin ama özellikle kadınların göç kararları üzerinde güçlü bir etkisi olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Kadınlara yönelik artan şiddet olayları ve Türkiye'de önleyici tedbirler alma konusunda etkisiz ya da isteksiz olan siyasi ortam, katılımcılar tarafından siyasi hoşnutsuzluklarının önemli kaynaklarından biri olarak dile getirilmiştir.

Bu bölümde son olarak, bu araştırmanın katılımcıları arasında yaygın olduğu gözlemlenen kaçış söylemi meselesi ele alınacaktır. Bu kaçış söylemi, Türkiye'den göçün önceki büyük aşamalarının aksine, yeni dalga göçün öne çıkan bir özelliğidir. Bununla birlikte, 'kaçış' teriminin çağrıştırdığı anlamlar ne olursa olsun, bu araştırmada ele alınan belirli eğitim niteliklerine ve yabancı dil becerilerine sahip bireyler kayıt dışı ve düzensiz göçü kesinlikle bir opsiyon olarak görmemişlerdir. Bu da katılımcıların anlatılarına Yunanistan'ın onlar için kasıtsız ve tesadüfi bir varış noktası olduğu şeklinde yansımıştır. Sadece Yunanistan değil, başkent Atina ve orada bulunan, Avrupa dışından gelen üçüncü ülke vatandaşları için vize sponsorluğu sağlayan çağrı merkezi işi, aynı anda hem kaçış hem de yasallık arayışında olanların temkinli göçü için bir kesişim noktası olmuştur. Bu göçü temkinli göç olarak tanımlamamızın sebebi şöyle açıklanabilir. Her şeyden önce, göç için alınan riski en aza indiren ve aynı zamanda Avrupa çalışma standartları ve hakları vaat eden resmi bir iş sözleşmesi göç kararını kolaylaştırmaktadır. Aynı zamanda kaçış arzusunu tatmin etmekte ve Avrupa başkentinde uluslararası çalışma ortamına sahip bir yaşam sunmaktadır. İkinci olarak, Türkiye ile Yunanistan

arasındaki coğrafi ve kültürel yakınlık, bu göçü bu küme için güvenli bir seçim haline getirmektedir. Araştırmaya katılanların memleketleriyle bağlarını kolaylıkla sürdürmelerini sağlayan fiziksel mesafeye ek olarak, yüzyıllara dayanan ortak bir arada yaşama tarihi ve Türkiye'den gelen göçmenlerin ev sahibi toplumda kendilerini daha az yabancı hissettikleri bir Akdeniz yaşam tarzına dayanan benzer iklim ve kültürel yakınlık, göçle ilgili potansiyel zorlukları en aza indirmektedir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Yunanistan, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti vatandaşları için AB'ye açılan en yakın kapılardan biri olarak görülebilir.

Sıradaki bölüm, Yunanistan'daki yeni göçmenlerin mevcut durumuna odaklanarak göç biçimleri ve göçmenlerin gündelik gerçeklikleri üzerinde hukukun ve yasal çerçevelerin etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Özellikle, vatandaşlığın ve buna karşılık gelen vize rejimlerinin, göç politikalarının, kurumsal düzenlemelerin ve bunların sunduğu hareketlilik ve/veya hareketsizlik durumlarının göç gerçeklerini şekillendirmedeki etkileri ele alınmaktadır. Vize rejimlerinin ve kısıtlı göç politikalarının rolü son derece önemlidir, çünkü bunların etkisi göçmenlerin önemli bir kısmı için göç eyleminden çok daha önceki bir aşamada ortaya çıkmaktadır. Tabi oldukları oturum ve vize rejimlerine ek olarak, sahip oldukları vatandaşlıktan kaynaklanan hareketsizlik hissi, daha en başında bir göç arzusunun ortaya çıkmasına neden olmaktadır. Bu, gelecekte daha esnek hareketlilik fırsatlarını güvence altına alma hedefine yönelik bir ön adımı temsil etmektedir. Sınırlı hareketlilik durumunun kendisi yoksunluk hissine ve daha geniş hareket özgürlüğü potansiyeline ulaşmak için göç etme dürtüsüne yol açmaktadır. Günümüz işgücü hareketliliği bağlamında, küreselleşme ve bilgi ekonomisinin gelişmesiyle birlikte kalifiye işçiler daha fazla aranır hale gelmiştir ve bu nedenle göç politikaları nitelikli işçileri seçen ve kayıran bir nitelik kazanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, göç, genel olarak toplum ve göçmenlerin kendileri tarafından bir başarı olarak algılanmaktadır. Bu durum büyük ölçüde, günümüzde Türkiye'den göç edenlerin çoğunun, hedef ülkelerin mevcut göç politikalarını aşabilen yüksek vasıflı profesyoneller olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu durum, eğitimlerini yeni tamamlamış olanlar üzerinde göç eylemi yoluyla değerlerini göstermeleri için ek bir baskı yaratmakta ve bu da göç etme isteklerini artırmaktadır. Ayrıca, yakın gelecekte daha sıkı vize düzenlemeleri ve göç kontrolü olacağı beklentisi de (Czaika & de Haas, 2017) göç arzusuna katkıda bulunan bir

faktördür. Gençler, ileride menşe ve hedef ülkelerindeki mevcut siyasi iklim ışığında hareketlilik fırsatlarının daha sınırlı ve kısıtlı olacağını düşündüklerinde, göçü hareket özgürlüklerini güvence altına almanın bir yolu olarak görmeye başlarlar.

Bu bölümde, vize rejimleri, göç politikaları ve vatandaşlık gibi yapısal engellerin, yeni göçmenler için alternatif göç rotaları ve hedeflerinin oluşumunu ne ölçüde ve nasıl etkilediğini incelenmiştir. Söz konusu düzenlemeler ile belirli bölgelere, belirli grupların sınıf, cinsiyet, ırk, vatandaşlık ve yasal statülerine bağlı olarak girişleri engellenirken, bu düzenlemeler aynı zamanda göçü diğer yönlere mümkün kılmakta ve teşvik etmektir. Bu iddiayı doğrulayan bulgular, mülakat verilerinin analizinde ortaya çıkmıştır. AB pasaportuna sahip olmayan katılımcılar, vize düzenlemelerinin getirdiği kısıtlamalar nedeniyle başlangıçta tercih ettikleri destinasyonlara göç edemediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Bu durumlarda, kişilerr daha elverişli yasal erişim ve düzenlemelere sahip alternatif varış noktaları arayabilirler. Varış noktası tercihlerindeki bu değişim ya da 'mekânsal ikame etkisi' olarak adlandırılan durum, bireylerin göç etmeyi arzuladıkları ancak kısıtlayıcı düzenlemeler tarafından kısıtlandıkları zaman, göç fikrinden tamamen vazgeçmek yerine, göç arzularını gerçekleştirebilecekleri alternatif seçenekler arama olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir. Göç politikalarının ve vize rejimlerinin sınırlayıcı etkisinin yanı sıra, bu sistemlerin hareketliliği kolaylaştırabildiğini gösteren kanıtlar da mevcuttur. Göçün, işe alım anlaşmaları ve düzenlemeleri tarafından tetiklendiği ve misafir işçi programlarında gözlemlenene benzer bir şekilde daha fazla hareketliliğe ve göç koridorlarına yol açtığı bilinen bir durumdur. Katılımcıların anlatıları, varış yeri tercihlerinin, yani Yunanistan'a göçlerinin büyük ölçüde işe alım programı doğrultusunda geliştiğini göstermektedir.

Bu kısımda, göçmenlerin Türkiye Cumhuriyeti vatandaşı olarak tabi oldukları özel göç politikaları ve düzenlemeleri sonucunda yaşadıkları hareketsizlik koşullarını ortaya koyulmuştur. Avrupa vatandaşı olmayanların Yunanistan'da ikamet etmesine ve çalışmasına izin veren istisnai vize düzenlemeleri, birçok düzeyde hareketsizlikle karşılaştıkları için göçmenlere yalnızca sınırlı hareketlilik sunabilmektedir. Yunanistan'daki çağrı merkezinde çalışan Türkiyeli göçmenler için iki temel hareketsizlik durumu gözlenmiştir. Bunlardan ilki, AB içi fiziksel ve coğrafi

hareketlilikle ilgilidir. Görüşülen kişiler, yasal olarak istihdam edilmelerine ve bir AB ülkesinde ikamet etmelerine rağmen, çalışma izinlerinin şartları uyarınca başka bir AB ülkesine taşınmalarının yasak olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Sonuç olarak, AB'nin serbest dolaşım ilkesi üçüncü ülke vatandaşlarına uygulanamamakta ve katılımcılar için bir hareketsizlik durumu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Yunanistan'daki Türkiyeli göçmenlerin yaşadığı hareketsizliğin ikinci yönü ise işgücü piyasasındaki hareketlilikle ilgilidir. Avrupa dışından gelen göçmenler için düzenlenen oturma ve çalışma izinleri, ancak başlangıçta işe alındıkları aynı mesleki uzmanlık alanında veya belirli bir işverende çalışmaya devam ettikleri sürece geçerlidir. Bu nedenle, özel vize düzenlemelerinin üçüncü ülke vatandaşı olan göçmenleri işverenlerine ve belirli bir işe fiilen bağladığı söylemek mümkündür.

Vize ve göç düzenlemelerinin dayattığı kırılgan ve belirsiz koşullara yanıt olarak göçmenler tarafından benimsenen üç yaygın strateji tespit edilmiştir. Söz konusu stratejiler şu şekilde sınıflandırılabilir: kabullenme, terfi etme ve hareketlilik sağlama. Araştırma katılımcılarının geliştirdikleri başlıca stratejilerden biri, hareketliliklerini kabullenmek ve dahası kutlamaktır. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu çağrı merkezi işini, doğasında var olan tüm dezavantajlarıyla birlikte, arzu ettikleri hareketliliğe ve Avrupa'da uzun süredir arzuladıkları yaşam tarzına ulaşmanın bir aracı olarak görmektedir. Kısıtlı hareketlilik ve sınırlandırılmış iş gücünün getirdiği kısıtlamaların üstesinden gelmek için sıklıkla kullanılan ikinci strateji ise kariyer yükselmesidir. Bu yaklaşım, bireylerin yaptıkları işi gelecekteki kariyer gelişimleri açısından anlamlı ve faydalı olarak algılamalarını sağlamaktadır. Sahada, katılımcılarla yapılan görüşmeler ve gündelik sohbetler sırasında, Yunanistan ve Avrupa'da daha kapsamlı hareketlilik hakları elde etmek için potansiyel yasal prosedürlere ilişkin benzer bir anlatı tekrar tekrar ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna göre beş yıl boyunca resmi olarak Yunanistan'da çalışmaları durumunda göçmenler Yunanca dil ve tarih sınavına tabii tutularak AB içi serbest dolaşım hakkı edebileceklerdir. Bu imkan, katılımcılar için genellikle ilk göç planının ayrılmaz bir bileşeni olmaktan ziyade, peşine düşülmesi gereken ek bir fayda olarak algılanmaktadır. Bu düzenlemenin aynı zamanda bireyleri beş yıllık süreyi tamamlamak, Yunanca öğrenmek ve çabalarının karşılığında kayda değer bir fayda sağlama umuduyla işlerinde çalışmaya devam etmek için kalış sürelerini uzatmaya teşvik ettiği

görülmektedir. Bu düzenlemenin bireyleri beş yıllık süreyi tamamlamak için kalış sürelerini uzatmaya, Yunanca öğrenmeye ve çağrı merkezindeki işlerinde devam etmeye teşvik ettiği görülmektedir; zira bu çabalarının karşılığında önemli bir menfaat elde edecekleri beklentisi içindedirler.

Bu tezin ampirik bölümü, Türkiye'deki yeni dalga göç örüntülerinin Avrupa içi gençlik hareketliliklerinde gözlemlenenlerle kayda değer bir benzerlik taşıdığını göstermektedir. Bu gözlem, Avrupa'nın çevresindeki ülkelerden merkeze doğru yüksek eğitimli ve vasıflı bireyler düşünüldüğünde özellikle dikkat çekicidir. Bu tezin temel bulguları, Türkiye'deki yeni dalga göçmenlerin bir bölümünün, yüksek vasıflı göçün yaygın bir sosyal olgu olduğu bir destinasyona (Yunanistan) yönlendiğini göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla, küresel göç hiyerarşileri içinde, genellikle orta sınıf sosyoekonomik profile, eğitim ve kent geçmişine sahip ayrıcalıklı bir sosyal tabaka olarak kabul edilen Türkiye'den (literatürde yeni dalga olarak kavramsallaştırılan) son göç hareketleri, Avrupalı muadillerinin gerisinde kalmakta ve yeni Avrupa göç sistemlerine en dış noktasından dahil olmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, çağrı merkezi sektörünü ve göçmenlerin kendi ana dillerinde hizmet sunmaları etrafında şekillenen emek süreçlerini yeterince ele almamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, mevcut araştırmanın kapsamı dışında kalan bu konu, mevcut literatürde bir boşluğa işaret etmektedir. Bu nedenle, gelecekteki çalışmaların çabalarını bu boşluğu gidermeye yöneltmeleri tavsiye edilmektedir.

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